

# Young Klondike

## STORIES OF A GOLD SEEKER.

*Issued Semi-Monthly—By Subscription \$1.25 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, March 15, 1898, by Frank Tousey.*

No. 10.

NEW YORK, July 20, 1898.

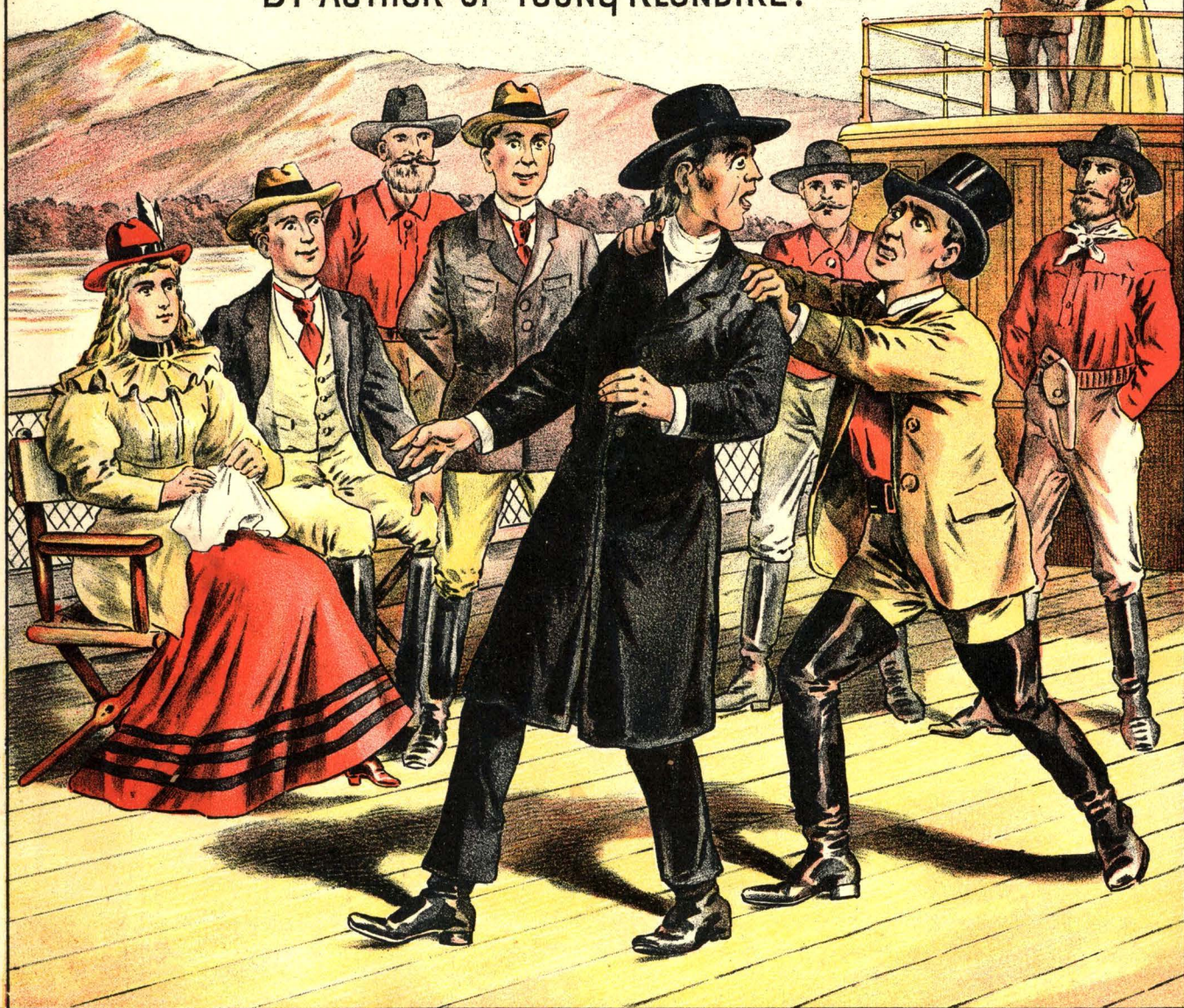
Price 5 Cents.

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—OR—

### WORKING THE UNKNOWN'S CLAIM.

BY AUTHOR OF "YOUNG KLONDIKE."



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## Young Klondike's Lucky Camp; OR, WORKING THE UNKNOWN'S CLAIM.

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### CHAPTER I.

MR. "T. T."

ONE beautiful evening in early spring, Young Klondike, with his friend, Dick Luckey, sat on the deck of the steamer Golden State, picking the banjo and talking over mining matters.

Near them on a camp stool sat Miss Edith Welton, the pretty San Francisco girl, who since her rescue by Young Klondike from a wrecked steamer on the occasion of his first journey to the Alaska gold diggings, had accompanied Golden & Luckey in all their wanderings, being also a member of this wealthy and well-known firm.

Edith being one of the capable kind and always busy, was now engaged in some sort of fancy work, occasionally joining in the conversation.

"We ought to be in Juneau by morning, according to Captain Hagen," she remarked. "What's your plan, then, Ned. Do you intend to put it right through to Dawson City over the Chilkoot Pass trail?"

"I think we had better, Edith. You know we are anxious to get home as soon as possible."

"So we are. It seems strange to think that we have been gone so long."

"We shall have been three months away from Dawson by the time we get back," said Dick.

"Right you are," replied Ned, "and I'm anxious to have a look into our business. It's all very well to leave one's affairs to others, but they can never be attended to as satisfactorily as one attends to them for himself."

"That's what's the matter. You seem to be a philosopher, young man. Ahem!"

The speaker was a tall, cadaverous looking individual, dressed in a suit of rusty black with a white choaker in front of his greasy collar.

He looked ministerial and he spoke the same way, his voice being deep and sonorous like the roll of a big bass drum.

The steamer Golden State was at the time moving along in full sight of those glorious Alaskan mountains below Juneau. The panorama opening before them was one of the most charming in the world, and its beauty was heightened by the starlight above and the interminable stretch of green water seaward.

It was, indeed, a scene for an artist or a camera fiend, but the artist would have failed utterly in his attempts to do justice to it, and the camera fiend would have been obliged to press his button many times to show it even in part.

All about the deck sitting, standing, lying, placed in every conceivable position were groups of would-be gold hunters bound for the Klondike, some destined to make their million, others doomed to disappointment, and doubtless not a few to die on the terrible journey over the passes which bar the way to the land of gold.

For one of these to address Young Klondike's party unintroduced was nothing strange, but the man with the fog-horn voice had been most persistent in his efforts to scrape acquaintance ever since the steamer left Seattle.

Not feeling any very ardent desire to know the man, Young Klondike had fought shy.

"Were you addressing me?" he asked, looking carelessly at the man.

"My young friend, I was," replied the man. "I remarked that you were a philosopher."

"Your remark is well meant, no doubt, but I don't see where it applies."

"Which is quite immaterial. The explanation of the application may be postponed until some more favorable season; meanwhile, may I ask you a question?"



"As many as you wish."

"Thank you—you are very liberal."

Dick could not help laughing at the man's pompous manner, and Edith bent her face lower over her fancy work with a smile.

"Do you know why I am so liberal, sir?" replied Ned.

"I can't say I do."

"It's because I see you are bound to find out all about me and my business, so I may as well give you the chance."

"And be done with it—just so. Perhaps it is a wise decision—wisdom worthy of a philosopher which brings me back to my starting point—ahem!"

"Suppose you fire away and save time."

"Speaking of time, there is no time like the present," drawled the stranger. "Usually you are accompanied by a lynx-eyed guardian in big boots and a plug hat, who frowns down all attempts at acquaintance. Ahem! I do not see him now."

"No; he has gone below for the moment."

"For the moment only. Then it behooves me to be quick. May I ask that gentleman's name?"

"You may ask, but I cannot tell you."

"What—what? Do you mean to say that he is only a chance acquaintance?"

"Not at all. He is an old friend."

"What—what? An old friend, and you do not know his name?"

"That is what I said."

"Impossible! Such a contingency is unknown."

"So's my friend."

"You mean to say——"

"That he is unknown—that is, I do not know his name."

"May I ask your own name, young man?"

"Certainly. I am Ned Golden."

"Of some definite location, doubtless. May I ask where?"

"New York City."

"Ahem! And this young gentleman?"

"Is Dick Luckey, my partner."

"Indeed! And the young lady?"

"Is Miss Edith Welton of San Francisco."

"Just so. I see it all now. This is the famous firm of Golden & Luckey that I have run up against. You are the notorious—I mean celebrated—Young Klondike. Is it not so?"

"You've hit it exactly."

"I mistrusted it. Pleased to meet you—so pleased."

"And I should be better pleased about meeting you if I knew your name."

"What? What? Is it possible that I have neglected to introduce myself?"

"That's what you have."

"Ten thousand pardons. I am Mr. Timotheus Trotter—yes."

The stranger pronounced the "yes" in a highly confidential tone, but as nobody had said "no," his object for so doing was not altogether clear.

"Look here, finish this conversation up as soon as you can," said Ned Golden, quietly. "We were getting along first rate before you intruded upon us, and I——"

Ned stopped short. He saw what was coming. A man wearing big boots and a battered plug hat was creeping up behind the stranger.

It was the very person he had been so curious about; in short it was the famous Unknown.

He held up his finger warningly as he tip-toed across the deck.

"Now, don't get rusty, Young Klondike," said the stranger. "I am coming to the point. The fact is, I have an important business proposition to make to you."

"Indeed! Then suppose you make it?"

"Certainly, I'll make it. I am——"

But they did not find out what Mr. Timotheus Trotter was just then, for at the same instant the right hand of the Unknown came down heavily upon his shoulder, and around went Mr. T. T. like a top or a teetotum greatly to his surprise.

"Ha! My man at last!" cried the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, I've got you now! Watch me put the bracelets on him, Young Klondike! Ye gods and little fishes! Wrong again!"

And the Unknown let go of Mr. T. T. as suddenly as he had taken hold of him, and taking off his tall hat bowed profoundly.

"Sir, I beg your pardon," he said. "I have made a mistake."

"Huh! I should think you had!" growled Trotter. "A deuce of a mistake. Is this man a lunatic. Young Klondike, or what is he? I'm not accustomed to be treated in this style."

"That's all right," replied Ned, laughing. "He's only my friend, the Unknown; he's often taken that way."

"Oh, he is, is he? Well then, sir, let me tell you that it is a deuced uncomfortable way for strangers. They don't understand it—no!"

Mr. T. T. was evidently very indignant.

It did not make him feel any the more pleasantly that Ned, Dick and Edith were laughing heartily.

The Unknown, on the contrary, was as grave as a deacon.

Some explanation was evidently required. The Unknown undertook to make it then.

"I trust, my dear sir, you do not feel offended?" he remarked.

"I am offended, sir, highly offended," replied Mr. T. T. in his most dignified way.

"But I have apologized."

"Your apology cuts no ice with me."

"I am a detective."

"I don't care a continental what you are."

"This is my little idiosyncrasy."

"Then let me tell you it's a deuced unpleasant idea—what-d'ye-call it. Don't do it again."

"Certainly not. By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'm the



most obliging man on the Golden State. In fact, I am willing to do anything to oblige."

"I suppose I shall have to come to the rescue, as usual," said Ned. "But let me tell you how it is, Mr. Trotter."

"I wish you would, sir, I wish you would."

"That's just what I'm going to do if you will give me a chance to speak."

"Go on."

"I'm going to."

"Do it now."

"I will if you'll stop talking."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Dick, for it was getting too ludicrous.

Highly offended, Mr. Timotheus Trotter turned on his heel and walked away.

"Now see what you have done," said Edith. "You have made an enemy for us all out of that man when we might just as well have made a friend."

"Edith, I couldn't help it. Actually I thought he was my man," the detective said.

Now seeing that Mr. Timotheus Trotter would not allow Young Klondike to explain this odd scene we may as well do it for him.

The Unknown was really a detective—or at least his friends on the Golden State so believed.

He had traveled in every part of the world, and he claimed that his mission was to hunt down a certain mysterious criminal whom he called his "man."

Who this man was, or what he had done, no one knew, for the Unknown would never tell. The mystery surrounding him was as deep as that which the Unknown had thrown about himself.

When Ned first met the detective his experience with him had been similar to that of Mr. Timotheus Trotter. For over a year now the detective had been the constant companion of our Klondikers, but just who he was they did not know, for he persistently refused to disclose his name.

"Drop it, drop it," said the detective. "Come now, I'll promise not to do it again till we get to Juneau. Could I say anything more than that?"

"You won't keep that promise, I'll bet," laughed Dick.

"Bet you I will," replied the detective. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, I ain't such a far gone crank that I can't hold in if I set my mind to it, but I had a reason for doing what I did."

"Of course, you always have."

"I don't like that smooth-tongued fellow, Young Klondike."

"Nor do I."

"He's a fraud."

"Shoudn't wonder a bit."

"Now let's drop him."

"Overboard?"

"Well, hardly; come down to business; I've got something to say."

"Never knew the time when you hadn't."

"Ye gods and little fishes, what's the matter with you, dear boy, are you wound up?"

"Not exactly; but there, I've run down now. Go on with what you've got to say."

The Unknown seated himself on a camp-chair, and put his big boots up on the steamer's rail.

"Young Klondike," he said, "I want the loan of ten thousand dollars."

"You shall have it as soon as we get to Dawson City."

"That won't do."

"I'll give you my check on the bank of California."

"That will do first class. I wish it was for a million."

"You could have had a million of your own by this time, if you had given attention to business instead of going skirting around the way you do. As it is I believe you are worth half a million, so I consider you perfectly good for the loan."

"Thank you."

"May I ask, though, why you don't use your own money?"

"Sure, you may. I invested it all in 'Frisco. I'd have told you that before if you had asked."

"The mischief you did! What did you put it into?"

"I didn't put it into the sewer, nor throw it into the bay, dear boy."

"Two allegations which I'm sure I never should have thought of bringing against you."

"I bought a big office building on Market street above Kearney."

"You did, eh? You sly wretch, and you never told!"

"Do I ever tell anything?"

"Never, if you can help it."

"Is there anything particular you'd like to have me tell you about now?"

"Yes, several things."

"For instance what?"

"For instance, your name and when you mean to pay me the ten thousand dollars."

"The first I never tell to anybody, the last I'll answer right now."

"As I didn't expect any answer to the first we'll waive that."

"For the last let me say I'll pay you when I get good and ready."

"Thank you, thank you."

"I'll pay you interest, though, so you'll be nothing out."

"Thank you again, but I am not a pawnbroker."

"Who the mischief said you were?"

"Come, come, stop this repartee business. I'm sick of it," broke in Dick. "What does our unknown friend expect to do with ten thousand dollars—that is what I'm anxious to find out."

"Exactly," added Edith. "Speak up, Zed. We all want to know."

Sometimes they called the detective Zed, for he assured them that the old-fashioned appellation



actually belonged to him, but that was as near as they ever got to his name.

"Then hear the mighty secret," said the detective, grandiloquently. "I'm going to buy a gold mine."

"Where?" asked Ned.

"Sixteen miles up the Klondike, an entirely new diggings."

"What do you know about it?" asked Dick.

"Nothing at all."

"So I supposed."

"I take it as a flyer."

"Flyers are sometimes dangerous."

"Who's got it to sell? Someone here on the steamer?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Don't know."

"I'm the man," said a voice behind them.

It was Mr. "T. T."

## CHAPTER II.

ABOUT THE MAN WHO THREW DUST IN DICK LUCKEY'S EYES.

"WHAT'S that you say?" asked the detective turning on Mr. T. T.

Now all were very much surprised to find the stranger suddenly behind them again, but there he was and they could not tell how he got there.

He seemed to have entirely recovered from his huff and looked as pleasant as you please.

"Who says you are the man?" asked the detective, gruffly. "I ought to know who I'm dealing with, and I say it ain't you."

"You don't know."

"Beg pardon, but I do."

"Wait till I explain."

"That's just what I wanted you to do for me, but you wouldn't wait," said Ned. "Look here, neighbor, why do you keep bothering us? We don't want your company—travel on."

"I presume that this deck is free to everyone—yes!" drawled Mr. T. T.

"Then take the freedom of it somewhere else, and don't come bothering around here."

"Now, young man, that's surly. I don't want to intrude. Mr. Spenger sent me here."

"Hello!" exclaimed the Unknown. "Sit down. I'll talk to you!"

He explained to Ned and Dick that Mr. Spenger was a gentleman he had fallen in with at the steamer's bar, and that he was the party who had been talking claims to him.

"From what he says about it, I think it is just about such a claim as I'd like to invest in," he went on to add, "but I don't know where this gentleman comes in on the deal."

"You don't, eh? Did Mr. Spenger tell you he owned the mine?" asked Mr. T. T.

"No, he didn't."

"What did he tell you?"

"That it belonged to a friend of his."

"Exactly. I'm the man."

"Oh, I begin to see."

"Spenger is taken seasick again; he's turned in. You were to meet him in half an hour. Seeing that he couldn't meet you and that I am the real owner of the claim, he turned the matter over to me."

"That's all right then, if you can prove your title," said the Unknown.

"I can do that," replied Mr. T. T. "I've got the documents right here with me. I can prove it any time you wish."

"Can you prove that there is any gold in the mine?" asked Ned.

"No, I can't do that."

"Of course, I don't ask anything of the sort," said the Unknown. "The land adjoins the famous Rosebud Mine. You've heard of that?"

"Half a million was taken out of the Rosebud last year," said Dick.

"Exactly, and then the claim petered out," added Ned.

"Which don't prove that the gold does not run over on to this claim of mine," said Mr. T. T.

"Not at all," declared the detective. "Anyhow, I'm willing to take my chances. I know the Rosebud. I was up there last fall. I made up my mind then if I could get the extension I'd buy it, and I've been looking for the owner ever since."

In mining parlance, the extension of a claim is the land next adjoining on the line of the gold deposit.

The Unknown knew what he was talking about. The Rosebud had proved a very rich mine indeed.

Mr. T. T. had now placed himself on a better footing with our friends.

Ned suggested that they repair to the cabin and examine his papers.

They went down to the cabin, but finding it pretty well occupied and no chance to get a private corner to talk business in, all but Edith went into the stateroom which the boys and the Unknown occupied together.

Here Mr. T. T. spread out his documents.

He held a deed of the land duly recorded with the proper authorities in Dawson City. There was a map, too, and a long report on the condition of the Rosebud at the time of closing, made by a prominent mining expert whom Young Klondike knew very well.

The whole affair seemed perfectly straight and regular, and as the Unknown was still determined to make the investment, Ned drew up a check for ten thousand dollars on the bank of California.

"By the way, whose name shall I draw this in?" he asked, with a comical look in his eye.

"Timotheus Trotter," replied the Unknown. "Ha! Ha! dear boy, you did not catch me there."

"Anything you say goes."

"That's all right, of course," said Mr. Trotter. "I'd take your check for a million, Young Klondike, but I—er—I—"

"Well, what?" demanded the Unknown. "Why don't you go ahead and make out the deed?"



"Would you mind telling me in whose name I shall make it out?"

"Not at all."

"But I haven't been introduced to you yet, Mister—Mister—"

"Call me Mister What's-yer-name—that's what you are thinking."

"I am thinking how I shall write the deed."

"Write it with a pen—a lead pencil won't go."

"Now, come, this is business."

"I know it."

"I want to know the name."

"So you shall. Make it in the name of Golden & Luckey."

"Hold on there!" cried Ned. "We are not buying claims."

"Yes, you are; you are buying one for me," said the detective, emphatically.

He had his way, too, for the deed was made out accordingly.

After it had been handed over to the Unknown, Mr. Timotheus Trotter said a few more pleasant things about his claim, pocketed his check and withdrew.

"There! I've made a bargain!" exclaimed the Unknown. "I feel it in my bones!"

"You've been swindled and I'll bet on it," declared Dick.

"What! What!" cried the Unknown. "Who says I've been swindled? Where does the swindle come in?"

"I don't know. There's a nigger in the fence somewhere, though."

The Unknown was very indignant that Dick should thus show a want of confidence in his judgment.

Ned would not take sides either way.

He could not deny that the whole transaction seemed straight enough and yet it did seem rather out of order to buy a claim that way.

During the rest of the evening nothing more was seen of Mr. T. T.

Indeed, Young Klondike and his friends thought very little about him.

An investment of ten thousand dollars was a mere bagatelle to those lucky Klondikers.

If the claim proved a worthless one the Unknown would not have cared, and as for Golden & Luckey, who, of course, were the real purchasers, they would never have shed a tear.

In fact all hands on the Golden State found something else to think about that evening.

A sudden change in the weather came.

All at once a strong wind began to blow down from the northeast.

It was a cold wind and it brought snow with it.

The sea grew rough, and the little steamer with its heavy load of human freight began to pitch about in a most uncomfortable fashion, while the whirl of snow on deck drove everybody into the cabin.

This was one of the beauties of spring travel on the coast of Alaska.

Such sudden storms are very common at that season of the year.

Edith now began to show decided signs of seasickness, as indeed almost all the passengers did, so she retired early.

The Unknown had disappeared—something he was given to doing—and Ned and Dick, after spending an uncomfortable hour trying to read by the dim cabin lights, decided to turn in, too.

When they got into the state-room they found the Unknown already in his bunk.

"What's the matter—seasick?" asked Ned.

"Well, not exactly, dear boy," replied the detective. "I feel a little squalmish, that's all, and as I found I was not likely to hold my dinner standing up, I decided to lie down."

"Like a sensible man."

"I hope I always act like a sensible man, Young Klondike."

"You do as a rule. I don't know about this extension to the Rosebud, though."

"Oh, that's only a flier, as I told you."

"It may fly away with ten thousand dollars."

"I should be sorry to have it do that. Let's live in hopes."

"Where have you been all the evening?"

"In here."

"What doing?"

"Why copying those papers. I always make copies of all important documents. In case the original is lost, then I have the copy—see?"

"I see you are a man of method."

"And why not? Does any man succeed who is without method?"

"Have you succeeded?"

"In making a confounded jackass of myself—yes."

"There's nothing jackasstical in copying those deeds," said Dick. "I think it was a blame good idea. Let's see them, will you, Zed?"

"They are in the inside pocket of my coat," replied the Unknown. "It's hanging on the nail there; you can look at them as much as you have a mind to. I'm going to sleep."

But Dick did not really want to look at the papers.

Somehow he felt that it was not altogether safe to leave them in the Unknown's coat pocket, and he shrewdly guessed they were there, so instead of putting the documents back where he found them, Dick opened his grip and stowed them away, the originals in one side and the copy in the other. And then following the example of Ned and the Unknown turned in and went to sleep himself.

At least he tried to sleep, but it was hard work.

The storm was steadily increasing. The Golden State pitched and rolled in the most alarming fashion.

Ned slept through it all like an old stager, and the Unknown positively snored, but somehow Dick could not manage to keep asleep, although he dropped off again and again.

Once he was aroused by the hoarse croaking of the



steamer's whistle, again his head was brought in sudden and violent contact with the top of the bunk, with force enough to wake anybody up. The next time he was suddenly aroused by what he took to be someone fumbling at the door outside.

He listened for a moment, but the sound was heard no more, and Dick dropped off to sleep again thinking as consciousness left him that he had been mistaken.

But it was not so.

There was a man outside the state-room door, and what is more he was trying to open it with a skeleton key, keeping a narrow watch about the cabin all the time.

After a moment the man succeeded in the attempt, for the lock yielded.

Very softly he drew the door open and peered in.

All was perfectly quiet inside the state-room, except for the occasional snorts of the Unknown.

The man pulled his hat down over his eyes, stepped in, and cautiously closed the door behind him.

There he stood in the darkness waiting and listening.

Still there was no stirring—this time Dick was really asleep.

Softly the man took a small bottle out of one pocket and a clean handkerchief out of another.

With the contents of the bottle he saturated the handkerchief and a strong odor of chloroform began to fill the state-room.

The man bent over Young Klondike in the lower berth, and laid a handkerchief over his mouth and nostrils for a moment.

Ned was sound asleep when the handkerchief went on, but his slumbers were still sounder when it came off.

The rotten old steamer might have gone to the bottom then, and he would never have known.

It was the detective's turn next. He got the full benefit of the handkerchief.

Usually the Unknown slept with one eye open, but he was unusually sleepy that night—he was more so when the handkerchief came away.

Dick was in the top bunk, and the man took him last, standing on a chair in order to accomplish his purpose more easily.

But just as the handkerchief was about to be applied, Dick started up.

He saw the face before him, and half awake thought it was the Unknown.

"What's the matter?" he muttered. "What do you want?"

Instead of answering the man suddenly raised his left hand, and flung a lot of fine dust mixed with Cayenne pepper in Dick's face.

It blinded him—stifled him—he fell back coughing and sputtering, and then all in an instant a hand was gripped tightly about his throat and the chloroform saturated handkerchief came down about his nose.

Dick knew what had happened and felt himself going, but could not resist it.

In a moment he was as entirely unconscious as the Unknown and Ned.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN STATE.

YOUNG KLONDIKE was the first to go off into unconsciousness under the influence of the chloroform saturated handkerchief, and he was the first to come to his senses again.

He suddenly awoke with a confused feeling in his head, entirely unable to remember where he was, or to account for his very peculiar sensation.

"What in the world is the matter with me?" he muttered. "I feel as though I was drunk."

Just then the steamer gave an awful lurch, banging Young Klondike's head against the partition.

It knocked some of the wits back, and it made him wonder if he had not been knocked before in his sleep.

Ned tumbled out of the bunk and shook himself.

The state-room was dark and the steamer was rolling terribly; the door was open and swinging back and forth.

Young Klondike got it alongside the head before he knew what was coming or had time to get out of the way.

"Confound it all! I can't stand this sort of thing," he muttered. "Is everything going to pieces, or what's the matter?"

He slammed the door shut and turned the key, struck a match and lighted the lamp.

Then he saw what had been going on in the state-room.

The steamer trunk which Ned, Dick and the Unknown used in common had been forced open and its contents lay scattered all around.

It was the same with their grips. Clearly a burglar had been in the state-room.

"Dick! Dick! Zed! Wake up!" Young Klondike cried. Then getting no response from his friends in the other bunks, he realized the whole of the rascally transaction.

There lay Dick and the Unknown entirely unconscious, but how they came to be so, Ned could only guess, for the air through the open door had blown the smell of chloroform all out of the place.

It took Ned a good ten minutes to bring Dick back to his senses.

Poor Dick had received a double dose and the Unknown seemed to be in an equally bad fix.

They came out of their bunks in a high state of excitement.

"We've been chloroformed! We've been robbed!" sputtered the Unknown. "Ye gods and little fishes! This is a pretty state of affairs! I'll complain to the captain! I'll overhaul everybody on board this blamed old tub! By the Jumping Jeremiah, if I have



to arrest every man on the steamer I'll do it, but I'll get my money back!"

"Better wait and find out how serious it is first," said Ned. "We don't know yet that we've been robbed at all."

Dick and the detective bathed their heads and felt better; until this was done Dick, who was terribly mixed up, did not try to speak.

Then he related what had happened as far as he knew it.

"Who was the man?" demanded the detective. "Who was the man?"

"That's more than I can tell you," replied Dick. "I thought it was you at first. Then I got all that dust in my eyes, and the next thing I knew I didn't know anything, and——"

"Bother! It wasn't dust, it was pepper."

"I shouldn't wonder, my eyes smart horribly. What have we lost? That's what I want to know."

"Just what I'm trying to find out," said Ned, who was rumaging around.

"It's that man, Trotter," cried the Unknown. "I know who it is! It's Trotter! He's the thief; he has stolen those papers, and means to do me out of my claim!"

Dick was working to prove this while the Unknown was talking.

It will be remembered that Dick took precautions against this very thing.

In one side of his grip he put the original documents relating to the Unknown's claim, in the other he put the copies.

The Unknown did not know this. He immediately felt in his pockets for the papers.

Not finding them, he shouted out that he had been robbed, but Dick began to examine the stuff which had been turned out of his grip, and now lay scattered about the floor.

Immediately he found the original papers.

"Here they are!" he cried. "We are all right now. Where's the copies?"

"Hooray! The country is safe! And so's my claim!" cried the Unknown.

"Copies! What copies? What do you mean, Dick?" demanded Ned.

Dick promptly explained.

"Now, come, that was mighty sharp in you," said the detective. "As for me, I ought to be kicked for not being more watchful. Where are the copies, Dick?"

"You'd better ask the thief," replied Dick. "I can't find them. They ain't here."

This brought them face to face with the true situation.

No money had been taken—just the copies of the deeds and papers relating to the Unknown's claim.

"Of course it's Trotter," said Young Klondike. "This is an old trick. I have heard of its being worked twice before."

"I could beat my brains out I'm so chagrined," said the Unknown. "Here am I a man supposed to

be up to every trick, and by the Jumping Jeremiah, they work it on me. That fellow, Trotter, must be arrested at once."

"Hold on," said Ned, "you can't prove anything, and anyhow we've the big end of the stick."

"We've got the original documents and you can stop payment on the check, Young Klondike."

"That's what," said Dick.

"We won't do anything till morning," added Ned. "Trotter can't get away. To arrest him would only make a scene and delay us in Juneau, for we can't prove a thing against him. Young Klondike, it will be just as you say."

They talked it over further, and then making sure that the state-room door was fastened, went back to bed again.

There was no sleep for Young Klondike, however.

For the remainder of the night he tossed and turned unable to close his eyes.

Meanwhile the storm increased steadily.

The way the Golden State was tossed about was terrible.

Ned knew that Edith must be suffering horribly from seasickness.

At six o'clock he dressed himself and went out into the cabin, leaving Dick and the Unknown sleeping as soundly as though they had never been disturbed.

He knocked on Edith's door and found that she had suffered a good deal during the night, but was now a great deal better.

"I've got over the worst of it, Ned!" she called. "You'll see me up all right when the breakfast gong rings."

Ned went on deck then.

The sky was clear and the wind blowing a perfect gale.

Other than for the laboring of the steamer, everything seemed to be going all right.

The long Arctic days were beginning. It was already light. Ned looked off on the mountains, and wondered why the captain ran so near shore.

"We must be much nearer Juneau than I supposed," he thought. "Wonder if we shall see anything of Trotter before we land?"

The answer to this question came right then.

Looking round, Ned saw Mr. Trotter coming up behind him.

The mining sharp looked as smooth and slick as you please.

He was making great efforts to walk straight over the slippery deck which was being pitched first at this angle and then that, all in the most astonishing manner.

"Ah! good-morning, Young Klondike!" he called, with a grandiloquent flourish. "Beautiful morning after the storm, is it not? I trust you rested well."

"Never better," replied Ned, shortly. "Look out there, if you try to walk in that stiff fashion first thing you know you'll be on your nose."

"Never, sir! I'm an old sailor, and—great guns! Help! I'm killed! I'm dead!"



Just in the middle of his speech, Mr. Timotheus Trotter got it in the neck, so to speak.

His feet flew up and his head went down. He landed on his nose, rolled over, tried to rise, got half up and then went down again, rolled over twice and bumped his head hard against the rail.

There he lay looking rather foolish. When he tried to get up down he went again.

"Help me up, Young Klondike," he said. "Can't you give a fellow a helping hand?"

"Not you," replied Ned, coolly. "You can roll overboard for all I care—you thief!"

It was stupid of Ned—very much so.

Here he had made up his mind not to give Mr. T. T. a hint of his suspicions, and right on top of that he gave him the biggest kind of hint—in fact, he gave the whole snap away.

"Well, upon my word! What do you mean by that, Golden?" demanded the mining sharp, scrambling up and managing to support himself by clutching the rail.

Ned turned on his heel and walked off.

Mr. T. T. did not follow him.

In fact, Young Klondike saw no more of the man. He did not appear at the breakfast table, and during the early morning hours he was not visible on deck.

"You've made the biggest kind of mistake," said the Unknown, when Ned came to tell about it. "Now, he'll be right on guard, and the chances are he'll find some way of getting the best of us."

"No, sir! I'll stop the payment of that check just as soon as ever we get into Juneau, and——"

"And I wouldn't, Ned."

"Why not?"

"Then I shall have to give up my claim or raise the money elsewhere, and I don't want to do either."

"Hello! I never thought of that."

"You see I am right."

"You are if you are determined to stick to your purchase."

"Which I am. I'm satisfied that the claim is a good one."

"You don't know that."

"I don't know it, but I'm willing to take my chances."

"And so you are determined to work it!" put in Dick.

"Yes, I am."

"Then that settles it," said Ned, "I give it up. We've got the best of the old land shark, anyhow, Dick, and, as for the rest why we'll just work the Unknown's claim."

About nine o'clock Edith came out of her state-room instead of being on hand for breakfast as she had promised Ned.

The poor girl's face showed what she had suffered during the night.

But she was bright and cheerful, and listened to Ned's account of the attempted robbery in the state-room with intense interest.

While they were talking about it in the cabin a

man came running down off the deck, shouting out that Juneau was in sight.

This started everybody up out of the stuffy little cabin.

In a moment the deck was crowded with Klondikers.

The steamer was just turning in between the big rocks which mark the entrance to Juneau Harbor.

The wind was blowing harder than ever, and the tide was running strong, but no one thought of danger now—and yet, as it happened, this was the very time danger was at hand.

Whether the captain missed his reckoning, whether the tide took the steamer off her course, or the wind was responsible for it is hard to say, but all at once the Golden State went slam bang on a sunken rock, staving a terrible hole in her bottom and throwing nearly everyone off their feet.

Ned, Dick and Edith went down with the rest; the Unknown alone managed to maintain his equilibrium.

"We're sinking! We're sinking!" someone shouted, and in a moment all was in confusion, for the dread announcement was true.

The steamer was sinking.

Ten feet in length of her bottom had been staved in.

Right there in full sight of Juneau, the Golden State was wrecked early that spring morning.

She was going to the bottom, and nothing could save her.

There was a grand rush for the boat, every man bent on saving himself.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OFF FOR THE KLONDIKE.

"CLOSE to me, Edith! Keep close to me!" cried Ned, throwing his arm about Edith, and trying to pull her out of the creek.

"Never you fear, Ned. I ain't a bit excited. Let them go! We'll take our chances. You and I can swim ashore."

It was wonderful with what entire calmness Edith made this reply.

Dick had been separated from them and so had the Unknown.

Young Klondike and Edith found themselves in the midst of the crowd of excited miners, all struggling madly for the boats.

As for Ned, he knew the utter impossibility of swimming ashore.

The water was icy cold and so rough that it was more than doubtful if any boat could live even if it put out carefully loaded, which was safe to say not one of them would do.

The captain and sailors behaved admirably.

The former gave hurried orders to run the steamer on the rocks; the mate planted himself near the star-



board boats, and drawing a revolver threatened to shoot the first man who dared to lay a hand on them.

On the other side the crowd did get the boats and two were hastily launched.

The result was just what might have been expected.

One was instantly swamped and a dozen or more Klondikers were drowned.

The other managed to reach the rocks with its load as did the two boats guarded by the captain.

But we cannot describe all that happened during this exciting time.

Our business lies with Young Klondike and his friends.

The instant Ned succeeded in drawing Edith out of the mob he looked about for Dick.

He did not have to look long. Dick was right at his elbow.

"Here you are, Ned!" he exclaimed. "Don't think of trying to board the boats. We are all right, thanks to the Unknown."

"Where is he?" gasped Ned, pretty well winded by his struggles with the crowd.

"Right this way! Right this way! Oh, we were so afraid you'd try to get Edith on board the boats."

"I ain't such a fool as that," replied Ned, hurrying after Dick.

"Are we really sinking?" asked Edith.

"That's what we are now," said Dick. "In less than ten minutes the Golden State will be at the bottom, the Unknown says. Come on, come on! There ain't a moment to be lost."

Dick led the way to the stern of the steamer on the lower deck.

Here they found the Unknown waiting for them.

He had managed to wrench off two state-room doors, and what was more fortunate still, had contrived to lay his hand on a good stout rope, by means of which he had bound them both together, making a substantial raft.

All that remained was to launch this, and the Unknown stood there as cool as a cucumber surveying his work.

"Do we want our baggage, Ned?" he asked.

"I suppose it would be better," replied Ned. "Do you think the raft will hold us all and the trunks, too?"

"Of course it won't hold both the trunks, but I think we may manage to get Edith's on and our grips."

"And let our trunk go?"

"Yes."

"That will be all right. Dick and I will go for the trunk."

"Don't be long, then. By the Jumping Jeremiah, we may be all right if we move good and lively, but there ain't a moment to waste."

The boys hurried to Edith's state-room and got the trunk.

While the Unknown was strapping it on to the raft, they returned and got the grips.

By this time the water was almost on a level with the rail.

Terrible confusion still reigned on deck.

One boat had already been swamped, the others were being launched. The miners were shouting and struggling for places. Ned could not feel too thankful to think that they were not in it then.

He helped Dick and the Unknown tumble the raft over the rail.

The trunk and grips were entirely submerged, but they held their place, and the Unknown managed to hold the raft in all right with his rope.

Edith went over the rail like an old sailor and took her place on it, Ned and Dick followed, the Unknown insisting upon being the last.

He threw down his rope, made a leap and landed on the raft all right.

"We're safe!" he shouted, "and the tide is running in. All we've got to do is to keep cool, and we land at Juneau right side up with care."

Meanwhile, the sinking steamer was being driven with all speed toward the rocks.

"If we only had something to steer with," said Dick.

"We've got it," replied the Unknown. "Look here!"

It was a leaf from the extension table in the cabin; the Unknown had tied it to the raft, and the boys had not observed it before. The Unknown cut it free, and a capital rudder it made.

"No flies on that, are there?" he cried. "Look! We are going straight into the bay all right."

"There goes the steamer!" exclaimed Edith, at the same instant.

It was a fact. The Golden State had almost reached the rocks, when suddenly they saw her keel all over to one side.

The captain and those of the crew who had remained with her leaped into the water.

They were just in time to save themselves, for then and there the Golden State sank. The last they saw of the men they were striking out boldly for shore, which we may add right here they reached in safety, and turned up in Juneau in due time.

Meanwhile, the boats were making for the rocks, and very likely the Unknown could have steered the raft ashore, too; he did not try, but just let the tide take it into the bay. The wind was at their back and everything was favorable.

"We'll get there! Ye gods and little fishes, we'll get there!" cried the detective. "Don't let anybody on this raft get rattled. We are going straight to town."

"Who says that ain't a man out there?" said Dick suddenly pointing off to a seaweed-covered rock away from the line of which the Unknown was trying to steer.

A man had suddenly risen up on the rock.

He was hatless and coatless and stood there all wet and dripping, wildly waving his arms, and shouting for help.



"Well, well, well! Why, it's Mr. Timotheus Trotter!" cried the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, it's the original T. T.!"

"Help! Help! Take me off, for Heaven's sake!" shouted Trotter. "Don't leave me to perish here!"

"The scoundrel! He ought to be left," said Dick.

"That's what's the matter," said the detective, "but I know blamed well none of you will do it. In fact, I don't advocate doing it myself."

"Of course not," cried Ned. "We ain't murderers, even if he is a thief; steer straight for him, Zed."

Mr. Trotter evidently felt great doubt about their intentions, for he kept right on shouting at the top of his lungs.

But when he saw that the raft was turning his way he quieted down and stood there shivering, waiting for them to come up to him.

"I came out of the boat that was swamped," he called. "Most of those fellows were drowned, but I managed to swim to this rock. For the love of Heaven, Young Klondike, don't leave me here!"

"No one means to leave you there," called the Unknown. "Bear a hand and catch this line!"

If he had missed it the raft would undoubtedly have passed the rock, and it is not at all likely that they could have worked it back again.

Mr. T. T. did not miss it, however. He looked out for that and caught the rope on the fly.

In a moment he had the raft all right alongside the rock and came aboard, dropping down all in a heap as the wind and tide sent them whirling away from the rock.

"Thank you! Thank you," he gasped faintly. "You have saved my life. I shall not forget this."

"Humph! I suppose not," growled the Unknown. "We are not very likely to forget you either. So you are one of those mean snoozers who crowded into that first boat?"

"Wha—what's the matter with you all? You seem to be very much down on me all of a sudden," stammered Mr. T. T.

"We don't like chloroformers," said the detective, dryly. "No; we don't like that kind."

"Chloroformers! Great Heavens, man, what do you mean?"

"Nor pepper throwers," said Dick.

"Nor thieves," added Ned.

Mr. T. T.'s face turned red and then white. He seemed too excited to speak.

"You can sit here as long as the blamed old thing will hold us," said the detective, "but we don't want nothing to do with you—understand that."

"Why, there must be some terrible misunderstanding here," said Mr. T. T. "I give you my word as an honest man that I haven't the faintest idea what you mean."

"I wouldn't take your word under oath," said Ned.

"As for me, I wouldn't trust you as far as I could sling a bull by the tail," chuckled the detective.

Edith said nothing, but her face showed Mr. T. T. that she felt just the same as the rest.

Meanwhile, the raft was going on at a good rate of speed and what was better, the wind and tide were doing all that could be expected of them, in that they were taking it directly to the town.

For some moments Mr. T. T. said nothing; in fact, he acted like a man who did not know what to say. Then all at once he seemed to pull himself together, and blurted out:

"Have either of you lost anything? Have you been robbed? If so, when and by who? I don't like to be accused without a hearing—no!"

"No, we haven't lost anything, but our trunk," replied the detective with a chuckle. "Oh, no!"

"Surely you do not accuse me of stealing your trunk, mister—mister—I haven't the pleasure of knowing your name."

"No, nor you never will have that pleasure. No, again! We haven't lost anything—oh, no!"

"Then what are you all talking about? What does it all mean?"

"It ain't worth while to explain."

"I say it is! I want to know. Young Klondike, you were the first to call me a thief. I appeal to you."

"And I'll answer you right here. You were in our state-room last night."

"Why, certainly I was."

"There! He don't deny it!" exclaimed the Unknown.

"Why should I deny it? Do you suppose I've forgotten that little transaction of ours about the mine?"

"Enough!" said Ned. "This is all nonsense! A man came into our state-room last night and chloroformed us and stole the copies we made of the papers covering that transaction. We believe you to be the man."

"I!" cried Mr. T. T., throwing up his hands in well assumed astonishment. "I a chloroformer and a thief! Ridiculous! Why, you must have taken leave of your senses, Young Klondike, to imagine anything of the sort!"

"Indeed I haven't," said Ned.

"Indeed he hasn't," added the Unknown, "and I'll prove it, too!"

He made a sudden spring without rising, which would have been fatal, and caught Mr. T. T. by the throat.

"Look out! You'll swamp the raft!" cried Edith.

"Let her swamp! I've got him. I'm going to make the thief disgorge!"

"Let go! Let go! You're choking me—you're killing me!" gasped Mr. T. T.

But the Unknown was not one of the kind to let go until he had accomplished his purpose.

He squeezed Mr. T. T.'s throat until the man's eyes were almost starting out of his head.

Then suddenly he threw him back on the raft,



and triumphantly held up a small bottle and a bundle of papers.

While choking the thief with one hand, the detective had picked his pockets with the other.

"There you are, Young Klondike!" he cried. "You see that I made no mistake!"

Evidently he had not, for the bottle contained chloroform, and the papers were the missing copies.

Not a word did Mr. T. T. say after that.

He just gathered himself up, and sat there looking seaward.

The Unknown tossed the bottle overboard, and pocketed the copies.

After that he gave his whole attention to the steering and the raft made splendid progress, and in due time drew near enough to the wharves of Juneau to enable them to attract the attention of the people.

Several tugs had put out and were steaming toward the scene of the wreck.

One of these took Young Klondike's party off the raft, and they were carried ashore.

Here Ned Golden was instantly recognized, and many came forward to welcome him and listen to his exciting story.

The crowd followed them up to Miller & McKinnon's Hotel, and there the story had to be told all over again.

But Mr. Timotheus Trotter did not keep with them. He embraced the first opportunity to make himself scarce and was seen no more.

After a little the tugs began to come in, bringing the ship-wrecked Klondikers.

It was a day of excitement in Juneau, but Ned and his party kept out of the way of the curiosity seekers as far as possible, for they had plenty of business to attend to in order to get ready to make a quick start for the diggings which they were determined to do.

But with all the energy they could put into the business, it took our Klondikers a week to get ready for their start to the gold diggings.

During the week nothing was seen of Mr. Timotheus Trotter.

Indeed, Young Klondike ceased to think of the fellow.

The Unknown had completely downed him and that was enough.

At last the starting hour came.

A great company of Klondikers went up by steamer to Dyea.

From there the start over the dreaded Chilkoot Pass was made.

Tramping along over the snow, dragging their loaded sleds after them, Ned, Dick, Edith and the Unknown went with the rest.

It was old times come again.

The land of gold lay before them. They were on their way to the Klondike once more.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ARRIVAL AT THE UNKNOWN'S CLAIM.

THE long journey from Juneau to Dawson City was accomplished by our Klondikers in two days less than the regular time.

They went by the usual trail.

First it was over the mountains by the Chilkoot Pass and Lakes Linderman, Bennett and Tagish were covered. Then it was Marsh Lake and the rivers to Lake Le Barge, then down Thirty Mile River and Lewis River and so on to Fort Selkirk.

At last Dawson City lay in plain sight before them, and our travelers found themselves floating on the mighty Yukon again, reckoned by some to be the largest river in the world.

All Dawson City turned out to meet Young Klondike after his long absence.

The reception given to the ever popular firm of Golden & Luckey was a regular ovation.

Ned found things little changed.

The town was full of reports of great gold discoveries made far up the Klondike and on the creek.

Among others was the rumor of a particularly rich discovery in the immediate vicinity of the Unknown's claim.

"That's business!" cried the little detective, when he heard this. "That's what I want. I'll bet my plug hat against a new one that I'm destined to become the King of the Klondike. I'm good for a million before midsummer, sure."

The first thing Ned did was to visit the claim recorder's office and inquire about the standing of the Unknown's claim.

Dick and Edith went with him, but they chose a time when the detective was elsewhere.

Just as they expected it was discovered that there had been much crooked work in connection with this claim.

For more than a year there had been trouble about it.

The claim recorder declared that no less than ten persons had been to see him about it, declaring that they had bought the claim and then been robbed of the deeds.

In each instance the seller had been Mr. Timotheus Trotter, but the claim recorder admitted that he had never seen the man.

"Does he really own the claim?" asked Ned.

"He does," was the reply. "It's the last of a tract of land he bought when gold was first discovered. Oh, yes, he owns it all right enough, but unless you want to take trouble on your shoulders I advise you to have nothing to do with that claim."

"Unfortunately your advice comes too late," said Ned. "Look here."

He produced the deeds and told his story.

"By Jove, you got the best of that old shark," laughed the recorder. "We'll transfer the claim to the name of Golden & Luckey on the books, and that will wind up Trotter for good and all."



Young Klondike and his partners left the claim recorder's office well satisfied with their work.

Claims away up the Klondike were rapidly advancing in value. Ned declared he had no doubt that the Unknown's claim would turn out as rich as anything they owned.

That night our Klondikers talked over their affairs in the Victoria Hotel.

It was determined that they should visit their different mining properties before starting in on the Unknown's claim.

"Dick and I will go, and Edith shall go with us," declared Young Klondike. "Meanwhile, you can fix up a steamer and get the tools together, and lay in a big stock of provisions, and we'll start off on our usual style."

"That will suit me first rate," replied the Unknown. "I should like nothing better than to lie around Dawson for a couple of weeks. I have an idea my man is in town, and I want to get the bracelets on him."

"Rubbish!" said Edith.

"Rats!" cried Ned.

"All Tommyrot!" added Dick. "Will you never drop on that stale old joke?"

"It's no joke; I'm in dead earnest. Just you wait till you see me capture my man," replied the Unknown as seriously as though he meant every word he said.

Next day they took leave of the detective, and in Young Klondike's own steam launch started up for the Golden & Luckey mill on El Dorado Creek.

Here they found business flourishing. Mrs. Colvin, Edith's friend, lived here, and was overjoyed to see them return.

There had been a great output of gold during the winter.

Golden & Luckey found that their riches had been rolling up in their absence.

"It will give us another million if all our diggings have panned out as well as this," declared Dick.

Then they went up to the Owl Creek diggings, and found matters flourishing there.

Then it was a return to Dawson City, and a trip down the Yukon to Forty Mile, and thence to Golden Island.

On this journey Mrs. Colvin accompanied them, as it had been determined that she should go up to the new diggings on the Unknown's claim.

Things were found to be in fine shape on Golden Island.

Young Klondike had many troubles in starting this claim on account of the toughs who had already located on the land purchased by the firm.

These troubles were all over now, and the toughs and claim jumpers had departed.

Golden Island and the claim at High Rock nearby, had panned out in great shape and were being worked night and day, producing a great output of nuggets and dust.

Back to Dawson City again was the next move.

Here they found everything ready. The Unknown had not spent an idle moment.

The steamer Arctic Boy had been chartered and loaded down with all that was needed for starting a new claim.

Five men were engaged as helpers on board with the understanding that they were to remain at the new diggings and assist in opening up the claim.

After two days' rest all hands went aboard, and early one morning the Arctic Boy steamed away from the levee at Dawson City and started up the Klondike.

There was no demonstration, for the time of their departure had been kept secret.

The fact of the matter was Young Klondike had grown to be such a well-known and popular character that he could make no move without attracting general attention.

"All our friends were tired of this. If it had been known at what hour they were to start half Dawson City would have come down on the levee to see them off, but thanks to Ned's shrewd management they slipped away unobserved.

It seemed like old times steaming up the Klondike in search of new diggings.

To the Unknown's claim it was about a day and a half's journey on that steamer, for the Arctic Boy was a very slow boy, and the Unknown's claim lay a long way up the river.

They steamed past all the well-known settlements, and came into a country practically unexplored.

That night they tied up alongside the bank, and a careful watch was kept out for Indians and toughs, but no alarm came, and morning found them in good shape to renew their journey again.

Toward noon all hands were on the watch in the wheel-house. Ned was doing his own steering, having become quite an expert pilot by this time.

"We can't be far from the place now," remarked Edith, looking off upon the long line of forest.

"If the map that goes with the deed has it right we are almost there," said the Unknown.

"We want Bear Mountain," added Dick. "On the map it is put down as having two peaks with a glacier lying in between them."

"That's what," said Young Klondike, giving his wheel a twist, "and if I know anything there's your twin peaks now."

Ned pointed far ahead on the left side of the Klondike where a tall mountain came against the sky.

"There ain't two peaks there," said Dick.

"Of course there are," Ned replied. "Can't you see?"

"I only see one."

"That's because we are in the wrong position. There were two there a moment ago. Watch and you'll see them again."

As the Arctic Boy steamed on the mountain assumed a different appearance.

Now all could see that there were two peaks.

They were covered with snow down to the timber



line, and between them lay a great glacier, its ice all white and glittering in the sun.

"That's the place, sure," declared the Unknown, consulting the map again. "Question is about the exact location of the claim."

"There's a shaft on the next claim," replied Ned. "We ought to see that pretty soon."

"Anybody working there now?" asked Edith.

"I heard say not in Dawson," replied Dick. "They tell me they wound up matters there last fall, and no one has been on the ground since."

"So much the better for us," said Young Klondike. "Look, Edith; there's your shaft-house all right!"

"Blest if it ain't," said the Unknown. "We're almost there. Now the map says half a mile beyond the shaft-house are two big hemlocks growing near a white rock."

"And there they are," replied Dick. "How about the line of your claim?"

"It runs between the hemlocks."

"Then we are almost there," said Young Klondike. "Here goes for the last laps! In a moment we will be at the Unknown's claim."

As they approached the shore they saw, as they thought, a man come out of the shaft-house and look at them.

He immediately vanished and the Unknown was not sure that they had seen any one at all.

"We did, though," said Dick. "I'm sure of it."

"Let's land and find out who our neighbors are," suggested Ned.

"No, no, no! Let's go right on to my claim!" cried the detective. "If we are going to do any exploring or any fighting let it be after we get located on our own ground."

"We are going to have the last on our hands all right," said Ned, suddenly. "Look! Look! There's your man again!"

But before any one could look the man had vanished.

Ned declared he had seen him dart out of the shaft-house, and disappear in the woods.

While they were talking about it, all saw another man spring out and vanish in the same way.

He was instantly followed by another and another, and so on until they had counted ten.

By this time all hands on board the Arctic Boy had become intensely interested, and were watching the shaft-house closely.

They had now come abreast of it, and could see the great "dump" where the waste sand and gravel, taken out of the mine, had been deposited, there were tools lying scattered about also, and every evidence that prospecting on an extended scale had been carried on.

Apparently no other shaft had been opened, and as they steamed past they could get a full view of the entire premises, but without seeing anything of the men.

"That's Trotter's gang as sure as fate," declared

the Unknown, "and what's more they are here for no good."

Young Klondike thought they had better arm themselves, and he prepared to do so; the rifles and revolvers were got out, and then the Arctic Boy turned in to the little creek which ran beside the two hemlocks.

The place was silent and deserted. A turn in the river hid the mill from view—but, of course, they could not help thinking of the men.

"Lay ashore there, one of you fellows, and stand ready to catch a line!" shouted Captain Ned.

Renee, one of the young French Canadians who had accompanied the expedition, jumped ashore.

"Send him the line, Dick!" cried Ned.

Dick threw the line to which the steamer's cable was attached, and Renee pulled the big hawser ashore, making fast around one of the hemlock trees.

"Hooray for our side! We're at my claim at last!" shouted the Unknown. "Ye gods and little fishes, I can see the gold lying all over the ground. My claim is a dandy! I wouldn't take ten million dollars for it. Here goes for the shore!"

The Unknown sprang over the rail and balanced himself for a jump.

He had no sooner done so than ten men suddenly came out into view along the timber line.

They were rough-looking fellows and all were armed with rifles.

"Look out!" shouted Ned, and he and Dick flung up their Winchesters.

"To blazes with them!" cried the Unknown, jumping for the bank.

The men at the timber line fired, one shot taking the Unknown's tall hat and sending it spinning into the creek.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HOW THE BIG BEAR CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

"FIRE!" shouted Young Klondike. "Let them have it, boys!"

Every rifle spoke then.

Edith, who was the best shot of the party, brought down one of the men, wounded.

But this did not seem to deter the toughs.

They fired again, but their aim seemed to be poor, and the shots flew harmless.

"Another round!" shouted Ned. "Let 'em have it! We ain't going to be driven off so."

Once more the rifles spoke.

Edith was as true to her good record as ever.

Down tumbled another man, wounded.

This brought the skirmish to an abrupt finish.

The toughs picked up their wounded companions, retreated into the forest, and were seen no more.

"We'll go ashore now," said Young Klondike. "I



expected some such reception as this, but it ain't going to scare me away for a cent."

"That was Trotter at the head of the line!" declared Dick. "I'm sure of it!"

"It looked so to me," added Edith.

"I shouldn't wonder a bit if you are right; still, I can't be sure," said Ned. "It doesn't make a bit of difference, though. Trotter is at the bottom of it, anyhow, but we are going to locate right here in spite of him, and I don't propose to be driven off for a cent!"

Meanwhile, the Unknown was trying to fish his plug hat out of the creek by means of a long stick, sputtering away all the while.

At last he succeeded in getting it in a sadly damaged condition. A hole had been shot clean through it and it was well water soaked besides.

"Your hat looks sick, Zed," laughed Dick.

"Why it has got three holes through it," said Ned.

"Well, that's pretty good."

"Now, come, I won't stand that," retorted the Unknown. "It's bad enough in all conscience, but ye gods and little fishes, there's only two holes in the hat."

"Dead wrong," laughed Ned. "There are three; what's the matter with you? Are you going blind?"

"I say there's only two. My eyesight is as good as ever it was."

"Bet you there's three."

"What will you bet?"

"A new hat."

"I'll take you up. There, look for yourself, there's only two holes."

"I see three, all right, don't you, Dick?" replied Ned, winking at his partner.

"Of course, I do," said Dick, laughing heartily at the Unknown's puzzled look.

"Am I blind, or what's the matter with me? Do you see three holes, Edith?" demanded the detective, turning the hat round and round.

"There's one on one side, and one on the other, and a big one in the middle where your head goes in," laughed Edith.

"Sold again!" cried the Unknown, and giving his hat a bang against a tree which sent it still further out of shape, the Unknown clapped it on his head and joined in the general laugh.

"Come, come," said Ned, "we'd better hurry up our cakes; first thing you know those fellows will be down on us again."

There was a great hustling about then to get things in shape for the night.

There were still several hours of daylight left, and Young Klondike was anxious to make things as comfortable as possible for Edith.

And no one knew how to start a mining camp any better than he did, besides which it must be remembered that he had plenty of money to do it with, and for money comforts and even luxuries can be had in the Klondike country just the same as anywhere else.

The first move was to make the steamer secure in the creek.

Next it was to build a house where they could be comfortable for the night, for the stuffy little cabin of the Arctic Boy was a very disagreeable place to sleep in, to say the least.

It may puzzle some of our readers to understand how our Klondikers expected to build a house before dark.

Yet it was all very easy.

Money worked in right here and Ned did not expect to spend more than four hours in building his house.

Fact was he had brought with him one of those portable houses so much used in the mining regions.

It came packed in big boxes with the parts all numbered.

There was nothing to do but to choose a foundation, set up the parts and nail them together.

Many hands made easy work, and long before dark a neat three-roomed house stood on the shore of the creek as solidly put together as if it had been there for a year.

There was a good sized sitting-room with a chimney made of cement pipe, and bunks for Ned, Dick and the Unknown.

Adjoining this was a kitchen with its stove and large cupboard well filled with pots, pans and everything to make our Klondikers comfortable.

Overhead was a loft with spring cot beds for Edith and Mrs. Colvin, with a ladder leading up through a trap door in the ceiling of the room below.

For the men, Ned had brought along another hut, a duplicate of the first, but as it was now growing late no attempt was made to set it up that day.

Instead, all hands went to work to carry in the belongings of the party, and by the time darkness came everything was all in shape with Mrs. Colvin busy cooking supper on the kitchen stove.

Meanwhile, nothing whatever had been seen of the enemy.

It began to look very much as if Edith had given them enough of it and they were not going to return again.

"All the same we'll keep a sharp watch," declared the detective. "My friend T. T. caught me napping once, but I'll be ding-donged if he's going to do it again. By the Jumping Jeremiah, that's a pleasant sound!"

They were standing near the steamer when the Unknown made this remark, and the sound referred to was Mrs. Colvin calling "supper ready" from the open door of the hut.

Renee was stationed outside to keep watch and the rest gathered about the table doing ample justice to Mrs. Colvin's good cooking.

After supper was over and the dishes washed up all gathered around the door of the hut, and Ned played his banjo, while Edith sang, and the Unknown told more of his marvelous stories.

Altogether it was a very pleasant evening, but



after they had turned in about nine o'clock the weather took a notion to change.

It had been cloudy all day, and now the temperature rose and it began to rain.

When it rains in the Klondike country at this time of year it means business, and this proved to be about the worst downpour Ned Golden had ever seen.

Ned was on guard alone when it began, for the men were all tired and needed sleep.

When he first heard the rattle of the big drops on the roof he went outside to see what it was all about, and that was the first time he saw the bear.

Ned happened to look up at the mountains to see which way the storm was coming, and his attention was immediately attracted by a light.

It burned brightly in among the fir trees about five hundred feet up from the level, shining particularly strong on a big ledge which jutted out from the forest, and there on that ledge sat the bear.

He was an enormous fellow with a shaggy, brownish coat—looked like a grizzly, and a big one at that.

He seemed to be looking down into the valley where the creek ran, and although it sounds like imagination, it seemed to Ned as though he was looking directly at the hut.

"Great Scott! Wouldn't I like to shoot that fellow?" muttered Young Klondike, instinctively bringing his rifle to his shoulder.

But the bear was far out of range, and it was the merest folly to think of shooting at him with any hope of success.

While Ned was thinking about it, the bear suddenly vanished, because the light went out and down came the rain in torrents, driving Ned back into the hut.

The incident worried him.

Not the bear, but the light.

"It must be those fellows camped up there," he thought. "I don't see how it can mean anything else;" so he woke up Dick and told him about it, and they went out into the rain together to have a look, but the light did not appear again, and of course they saw nothing of the bear.

"You'd better turn in again and have your sleep out," said Ned. "I'm sorry now that I disturbed you. Whatever the light means it ain't likely there will be any attack while this rain lasts, and I can call you again in case there is any alarm."

Dick refused to do it, however. He seemed to feel more concerned about the appearance of the light than Ned.

"We'll put it through together," he declared. "I ain't a bit more tired than you are, and anyhow it isn't safe for only one to stay on the watch."

They tried it outside first, but the rain was too much for them.

Then they went aboard the Arctic Boy and tried it on deck, but there was no dry spot from which they could see anything, so at last they determined to go back inside the hut.

It was dry here at least and it gave Ned great sat-

isfaction to find that the roof was tight, this being more than he expected considering how hastily the hut had been thrown together.

After talking a while they began to find it hard work to keep awake, so Ned got out the dominoes and they played several games, but it soon grew hard to keep up the interest and at last Dick forgot to make a move and his head dropped forward upon the table. Ned looked up at him and found that he was sound asleep.

"Well, that's pretty good," he thought. "Upon my word, I feel as though I'd like to do the same thing, but I mustn't. I'll let Dick go it fifteen minutes and then I'll wake him up and make him let me take my turn."

Ned meant just what he said, but as it often happens his fine plan went all astray.

To use a common expression the next Ned knew he knew nothing; in short, his own head went down on the table twice and came up again; then it went down a third time and didn't come up. In short, Ned was sound asleep himself.

It was odd, but nevertheless a fact, that the very time Ned went to sleep was the time the bear chose to come.

In fact when Ned first dropped off the bear was coming slowly down the mountain right behind the hut, which, in fact had been built up against it.

He walked on his hind legs like a man, and seemed to be picking his way with a great deal of caution.

Every now and then he would stop and shake the rain off his shaggy coat and then go on again.

All this time Ned and Dick were sleeping soundly, and their sleep grew deeper still as the bear drew near the hut.

At last he stopped on a big ledge of rock which overhung the roof of the hut.

He looked down upon the roof, and seemed to be calculating whether or no it would be safe for him to make the jump.

Apparently he decided that it would not be safe, for he turned around, and cautiously dropping his hind legs over the ledge let himself down by his forepaws.

Here he hung for a moment, and then dropped down upon the roof, landing there with a thud which shook the entire hut.

It awoke Ned, and he started up all in a tremble.

"Dick! Dick!" he shouted, seizing his rifle.

Before Dick could fairly get his eyes open Mrs. Colvin was screaming, and Edith was calling out that there was someone on the roof, all of which woke up the Unknown, and he tumbled out of his bunk, wanting to know what the row was all about.

"There's someone on the roof," cried Ned. "Get your rifle and we'll go out and see who it is."

He seized his own rifle and flinging open the door rushed out into the rain, closely followed by Dick.

"Thunder and Mars! It's the bear!" he cried.

He raised his rifle and fired, missing the bear which



instantly gave a leap down from the roof, striking against Dick and knocking him over.

The Unknown, who was just coming through the door, saw Ned blaze away a second time.

Evidently he missed the bear, for the big monster flung one paw about Young Klondike, lifting him off his feet.

With a snarly growl he waddled off into a ravine, carrying poor Ned with him, while the Unknown fired two useless shots at the great risk of hitting Ned.

In a moment both had vanished in the darkness and storm.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LOST IN THE STORM.

It was one of the most peculiar experiences Young Klondike ever passed through.

When the bear first got him, Ned thought he was a goner, for he had heard many stories of these big mountain bears hugging people to death.

The pressure about his body was so great that he thought his ribs must surely give way under it.

As the bear trotted along, Ned twisted and turned, tried in every way to free himself, but all without avail.

"It's all up with me unless I can do something," he thought. "I've got to keep cool."

He waited quietly for a few moments, thinking that the bear might get tired and set him down.

Nothing of the kind occurred. The bear just kept straight on up the ravine, and at last began to climb the mountain.

Ned knew then that it was all he could do hold him, and began to think that if he could make one grand effort he might be able to shake himself clear of the bear.

But he did not dare to do it just then while they were going on up over the rocks. He thought he would wait until they reached a level spot, and then try it. By and by they came to just such a place, and Ned did try it, and was treated to the greatest surprise he ever had.

Throwing all his strength into the effort he managed to free himself in part, but missed his footing and tumbled down.

The bear fell with him, and over they rolled dangerously near the edge of the precipice.

Ned felt himself going, and to check the motion wound his fingers into the bear's shaggy fur.

It was no use—he couldn't stop—he felt himself going over the brink, and right then the bear gave a startled cry which sounded just like a man.

The next Ned knew he was over the edge of the precipice, still clutching the bearskin which went with him.

But no bear—there had never been any bear. It

was only a man in disguise and Young Klondike was taking the only part of him that had resembled a bear down into the depths below.

It was an awful sensation, falling so in the darkness and storm.

Ned never forgot it. He thought he was doomed, but fate had something better in store for him, for he landed among the topmost branches of a tall hemlock tree. Fortunately they bore him and there he lodged, still clutching the big bearskin and listening to the shouts above him.

Looking up he could see an Indian bending over the edge of the precipice looking down.

He shook his fist at Ned, and calling out something unintelligible scrambled to his feet and went away, leaving our hero still clinging to the tree.

Ned waited for some time, scarcely daring to stir, for his hold on the branches was so uncertain that he knew the slightest movement might send him whirling down upon the rocks below, from which he would be pretty certain to roll on down into the ravine.

Of course he watched and listened as he waited. At last hearing nothing but the rattle of the rain on the rocks, he cautiously climbed down, branch by branch, and at length reached the ground in safety, but it was only the mountain side after all. He had all he could do to hold on to the rocks.

Picking up the bearskin which he had previously dropped, he flung it down into the ravine, scrambling after it.

By the time he reached the bottom the light was blazing on top of the bluff again, and as Young Klondike looked up he could see three men, two Indians and one white, all with torches, flashing their lights down into the ravine.

"That's the talk, is it," thought Ned. "They are right after me. Wait, I'll give them the slip yet."

Picking up the bearskin which was a splendid specimen of the kind and carefully tanned, Ned ran up the ravine as fast as he could go over the rough stones.

It was no easy work. Twice he stumbled and fell, but he kept bravely on, expecting every moment to come out upon the creek in sight of the house.

This was just where he missed it. The fact was, Ned was going in exactly the opposite direction, and every step was taking him further and further up the ravine.

The lights had now disappeared, and as the ravine was narrow and heavily wooded, it was very dark.

Young Klondike soon began to realize his danger. He knew that he ought to have come out to the creek long ago.

So he stopped and began to look around, but could make nothing out of the situation. He pulled the bearskin up about him to keep off the rain and hurried on a little further, but he soon became convinced that he had made a mistake and started to go back.

It was hard work retracing his steps. The way seemed rougher than when he had gone over it before, and what was worse there appeared to be no end to it.



Ned kept on going and going, but could not come out of the ravine.

He kept it up until he was tired; it rained harder than ever, the ravine narrowed, the rocks seemed to reach to the sky.

Reluctantly Young Klondike was obliged to admit the truth. He was lost in the storm.

"This is a bad job," thought Ned. "What in thunder am I going to do now? It must be that I've got off into a cross cut somehow. Confound it all, I don't know what to do."

He was dreadfully puzzled, and as he stood there peering about Ned caught sight of a faint light ahead of him further up the ravine.

"That's the hut!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "I've spotted it! Just a little more patience and I'm there."

He pushed rapidly on, coming presently to a place where the ravine widened out greatly. Here was an inclosure of several acres in extent, and standing in the middle of it was a lonely log hut.

A light burned in the window, and Ned, drawing the bearskin up about him so as to make his disguise almost as complete as the Indian's had been, crept on toward the hut with a sinking heart.

He knew the worst now. He realized still more fully that he was lost in the storm.

"I ain't going another step if I can get shelter in there," he resolved. "I might keep on wandering about till morning. I'm in the soup and I can't get out; first thing to do is to see who's in that hut."

He came up to it and peered in at the window. As nearly as he could make out there was no one in the hut. It was just a one room affair with a loft above. On the hearth a dying fire burned.

There was a table and a few chairs, and half a dozen bunks built about the wall, but there was nobody in the bunks—no one in sight anywhere. Having satisfied himself of this, Ned raised the latch and walked in on all fours, bear style.

He had his revolver all ready in his belt, though. It would have been rather unhealthy for any one to have tackled that bear.

There was no one in the hut to do it. Ned had made no mistake in thinking the place deserted.

He laid aside the bearskin, threw a big armful of wood on the fire, and soon had a cheerful blaze, which gave him a chance to dry his wet clothes, and in a little while he was feeling so comfortable that he determined to take his chances and go to sleep.

"I don't believe any one will come here before morning," he thought. "More than likely this hut belongs to the same crowd that attacked us, but if they've got under cover anywhere they are likely to stay there till daylight. I know I should on a night like this."

There was no ladder leading to the loft, just a tree trunk with pegs driven into it to climb up to the trap door by.

Ned climbed up, and finding the loft dry and comfortable determined to sleep there.

He thought it safer in case of a sudden attack, for he took pains to examine the loft carefully before lying down. There was a scuttle in the roof which was secured simply by an iron hook. Ned felt that he could raise the scuttle any time, climb out on the roof, and drop to the ground without any trouble at all.

Having satisfied himself on all these particulars, he spread the bearskin on the floor of the loft and went to sleep.

How long Young Klondike's slumbers lasted he never exactly knew, but all at once he was rudely awakened by the sound of a heavy fall on the floor of the hut.

Ned started up and rubbed his eyes.

"Get up there, you drunken bum!" he heard someone say. "Confound you, haven't we had trouble enough without your getting full. Get up, I say."

There was an answer of some sort in thick, muffled tones—Ned could not exactly make out the words.

Then came a scramble and another fall.

By this time Ned was peering down through a knot-hole in the floor taking in all that was going on below.

He saw two men there, rough-looking fellows both. One was dead drunk and the other sober enough to lift his companion up and tumble him all in a heap into one of the bunks.

This done the man lighted a lantern and swinging it back and forth in the open doorway shouted for someone to "come on."

After a little four white men and two Indians came into the hut.

Two of the white men were wounded and were being helped along by the Indians, who laid them in the bunks. One of the other whites Ned instantly recognized. It was Mr. Timotheus Trotter the claim shark—the original T. T.

"Here at last, boys!" he exclaimed. "Oh, this has been a deuce of a night! By thunder, I've got to get square with someone for this. Instead of capturing Young Klondike, he has knocked us out completely and everything in the soup."

"Huh! Huh!" grunted one of the Indians. "Young Klondike heap smart. He heap strong. Black Deer shoot him next time, no try to take him alibe."

Evidently here was the owner of the bearskin. Ned thought so at least, and he was quite right.

Mr. T. T. threw some more wood on the fire, and as one of the others began making preparations for supper he seated himself beside it and began to talk.

"It's the worst start ever I made, Don," he said to one of the men who stood beside him leaning over the fire. "I've sold the blamed old claim seventeen times and never yet did I fail to get the papers back. The idea of any one so getting the best of me as to come up and try to work it! The thought makes me fairly sick."

"Well," replied the other, "all I can say is you oughtn't to have sold. You knew what Young Klondike was, and you hadn't ought to have tried it."



Them's my sentiments and I don't care who knows them. You know I'm the kind of man who always says just what he thinks."

"Oh, to blazes with your sentiments. What do I care about them? What I want is some good solid advice as to how I'm going to get my claims back again; if you can't give me that, why hold your tongue."

"Seems to me we are feeling rather ugly just about now," Ned heard the other say. "I don't want no muss. All I'm trying to do is to keep the peace. Of course we've missed it to-night, but that don't say we're going always to miss it. The storm will be over some time, and more than likely we shall see some way of driving Young Klondike and his crowd off."

"Huh! Huh!" grunted the Indian. "Young Klondike dead—he killed—tumble over rocks, p'raps."

"P'raps yes, and p'raps no," said Mr. T. T. "For my part, I don't believe it, Black Deer. That fellow has as many lives as a cat."

"Hanged if I don't believe you!" said Don. "Dead he may be, but I doubt it. Didn't we look everywhere for his body? Could we find it? No, sir, we couldn't! That's why I say he's most likely not dead."

"Your opinion ain't worth a continental cuss, Don," growled Trotter, "but there's one thing certain something has got to be done, for I'll be everlastingly kerwalloped if I'm going to have my claim business ruined by Golden & Luckey starting a mining camp in here; before I'd stand that I'd rather work it myself."

"Speaking of working it yourself," said Don, "suppose you were going to work it yourself, where would you begin, Tim?"

"Where?"

"That's what I asked."

"Why, the very place Young Klondike chose. He's the luckiest fellow out of jail. He hits it right every time."

"Why, I thought his partner was more lucky than he is," drawled Don.

"Is that meant for a joke?"

"Take it so, if you will. It will be Lucky Camp, though, whichever of them boys starts it down there on the creek."

How long this conversation might have continued if a sudden interruption had not come, it is hard to say.

Just then Black Deer happened to look upward, and caught sight of Ned's eye at the knot-hole.

"Hi! Hi! Someone in the loft!" he shouted, leaping to his feet.

This brought everybody up standing, and brought Ned to a realizing sense of his danger.

"I must get out of this," he thought, and he threw off the scuttle, but when he looked out and saw how steep and slippery the roof was he did not dare to attempt the escape.

Meanwhile, Trotter and his companions were daring

each other to go up into the loft. They had heard the noise and knew that somebody must be there.

But no one wanted to go, and while they were talking about it Ned made up his mind that he would not wait for any one to come.

"If I've got to get down the other way I've got to," he thought. "Here goes! I'll try the bear act on them, and I'll bet anything it will work."

He took it coolly, but it was a bold resolve nevertheless.

Black Deer was just starting up the pole when Ned, with the bearskin tied about him by means of two stout strings which were attached to it, gave one sudden spring down through the trap, knocking Black Deer down, and tumbling on top of him.

"A bear! A bear!" yelled Trotter, making for the door.

In fact they were all equally frightened, and made a rush for the bunks—all but the other Indian, who tried to strike Ned with a knife.

But Young Klondike was too quick for any of them.

They saw the bear rise on its hind legs and make a rush for the door, knocking Trotter down in its flight.

"Kill! kill!" yelled the Indian. "Him no bear! Him man!"

Don started to fire, but the bear got in ahead of him.

Wheeling about, Ned fired six shots from his revolver into the hut, and then ran for all he was worth. Wild shouts followed him, shots came whizzing after him.

Still the bear ran on into the darkness and storm.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### STARTING UP LUCKY CAMP.

WITHOUT being aware what damage his revolver had done, Ned ran on at top speed.

He was closely pursued by Trotter, Don and Black Deer, who fired several shots at him, but none took effect.

Finding the bearskin impeded his movements Ned threw it aside.

He managed to load up as he ran, and turning he fired at his pursuers.

But he could not see to take aim in the darkness, nor could they, and the shots were without effect on both sides.

"Surrender! Hold on there, or we'll settle your hash for you, Young Klondike," shouted Trotter, blazing away again.

They were rapidly gaining on poor Ned, and there is no telling what the result might have been, when all at once, rounding a projecting rock, he saw several persons running toward him armed with rifles.

Ned thought it was more of the enemy and halted, ready to defend himself to the last, when to his in-



tense relief he caught sight of the Unknown's battered plug hat and heard Dick shouting:

"Ned! Ned! Oh, Ned!"

What a change all in an instant! It was wonderful!

There was Edith, too, and two of the Frenchmen. Young Klondike had run in among friends.

Not a moment was wasted in talk or explanation.

"Drive them back!" cried Ned. "We've got nothing else to do. Drive them back, and then we'll make our escape."

They threw themselves across the ravine and began blazing away.

It was too much for Trotter and Don, of course, and they took to their heels and ran like Black Deer, who ran like his namesake.

Young Klondike did not pursue them.

In a few brief words he told his story, and they hurried back to the hut, which was at no great distance away.

Dick and the others had been out looking for him ever since the attack on the hut by the bogus bear, but it was only by accident that they ran into him there in the ravine.

And so the adventures of the night ended, for they saw nothing further of Trotter's gang.

Morning dawned bright and pleasant.

The rain had cleared the atmosphere, and it was really warm for the time of year.

"We want to get right to work on the Unknown's claim," said Ned, as soon as breakfast was over. "I don't believe those fellows will attack us again right away, and if we can fortify ourselves we'll be safe against them when they do come."

"What's to be the name of this mine?" asked Edith. "You know we've always named our claims in advance."

"Give it the Unknown's name," said Dick, slyly.

"That won't do at all," replied the detective. "If you wait to give it my name you'll wait forever. It's my claim anyhow, and the naming of it ought by rights to belong to me."

"So it shall," said Ned, "only don't call it Young Klondike—that's all."

"Why should I when we've already got a Young Klondike up on Eldorado Creek?"

"That's why I don't want another on this creek."

"Am I to name it or not?"

"You are, decidedly."

"Then it's Lucky Camp."

Ned burst out laughing.

"Why, that's strange enough," he said.

"What's strange?" asked the detective.

"That you should call this Lucky Camp."

"Anything wrong with the name?" inquired Dick.

"I've been pretty well satisfied with it all my life."

"Why, there's nothing wrong with it at all," said Ned; "nothing whatever, only it happens to be the very name Trotter and his gang gave to the place," and Ned related what he had overheard while listening in the hut.

"That settles it," cried the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, I believe the name is a mascot. We are going to call it Lucky Camp."

"Which let us hope it may be," said Edith. "I believe we are going to strike a big thing here."

But there was no mining done that day.

Entirely undeterred by the fear of another attack, Young Klondike arranged the programme just as though nothing had happened.

The other house was unshipped and put up.

This, with other arrangements necessary for the comfort of the camp, took the whole day, and all hands were good and tired when the sun went down.

But it was a quiet day.

Ned kept a guard patrolling at the mouth of the ravine constantly, but nothing whatever was seen of the enemy.

After supper he and Dick went on guard themselves and kept it up till midnight, when the Unknown and Renee, the Frenchman, took their turn.

But during all this time they were undisturbed, and when Ned got up and found how the case stood, he was about ready to make up his mind that Trotter and his gang had given it up and gone away.

They now relaxed their caution and dispensed with the guard, for after all it was an easy matter to watch the ravine.

The time had come to begin the search for gold at Lucky Camp, and Young Klondike was anxious to be about it.

The first move was on the bed of the creek, for here the ground was not frozen, and if there was any gold to be found on the claim it was pretty apt to show itself there.

Panning in a creek bed on the Klondike is slow work, and cold work.

Ned looked the ground over carefully, and determined to try another plan.

"I reckon we could turn the bed of the creek if we tried," he remarked to Dick.

"I don't see why not," replied Dick. "All it wants is a little dam there by the point to throw the water over on the lowland. I think we could manage that easy enough."

"What do you say, Zed?" Ned asked the detective.

"Oh, don't ask me," cried the Unknown. "Ye gods and little fishes, do as you please, for I ain't in it. I don't propose to turn my hand to gold digging to-day."

"As usual."

"As usual, as you say. You know I'm no miner, Young Klondike."

"Won't even work your own claim?"

"Oh, you can call it my claim if you like, but——"

"But it is your claim. Only for you we never should have had it. If we strike anything it's going to be entered in your name and you've got to tell us what it is."

"Well, I won't tell you to-day, anyhow," laughed the detective. "I'm going into the mountains to



look up T. T. and his gang, and see what they are about."

"I wouldn't. You'd better let sleeping dogs lie."

"Shan't do it. I've got an idea I shall find my man among them. Anyhow, I'm determined to have a look."

It was the same old story. Work at mining, the Unknown would not, and so they let him go.

The last they saw of him he had his rifle over his shoulder and was traveling off up the ravine.

As soon as the Unknown had departed the boys went right to work.

Trees were felled and dragged into the creek to make a crib.

A double row of trunks was stretched across from the point to the opposite bank.

It took all the morning to accomplish this, and in the afternoon they filled the crib with stones.

It had the desired effect; in fact, it worked splendidly.

The water was turned from its bed and thrown over upon a piece of level land.

This left the bed of the creek dry, and Ned made a brief examination of the sand.

A few specks of gold were found, but nothing of any consequence.

It did not look at all promising that night when they sat down to supper, but then one can never tell what lies below the surface in placer diggings.

The top soil may show no color whatever, and yet a fortune may lie below.

On the Klondike and in all the surrounding country the gold deposit lies at a singularly even depth, varying from eighteen to twenty-five feet.

The average is twenty feet, and there is not much hope of making a big strike short of that.

All this Young Klondike knew perfectly well, and he was therefore not a bit discouraged at not finding a surface showing in the bed of the creek.

After dark the guard was placed again, for every one felt worried. The Unknown had not returned.

There was nothing to do about it, no earthly use in going in search of him.

It was the Unknown's custom to wander away in this fashion, and, of course, they had become used to it.

If it had been anybody else but the detective it would have been a great deal worse, but they had to make the best of it, for the night passed and he did not return.

Next morning it was a question whether they should go in search of him or continue their work.

The latter plan was decided on, and they began regularly to dig in the bed of the creek.

Here, owing to the running water, the ground was not frozen so deep as on dry land, where at all seasons one has to go through a layer of frost to get at the precious dust.

In the creek bed the sand was not frozen deeper than a couple of feet.

Then they struck a layer of finer sand, black as the Unknown's hat, and mixed with coarse gravel.

Ned set up the rocker, and while the Frenchman dug, he and Dick took to panning.

They were not very successful; nothing more than the merest trace of color.

This, however, did not discourage them a bit.

The hole in the creek bed was sunk three feet further, and they went at it again.

"You are going to have better luck this time," said Edith. "I feel absolutely sure of it."

"Let her come," said Ned, "we're ready."

Dick and Renee were lugging big buckets of sand, which they dumped into the rocker.

"Throw the water on for luck, Edith," said Young Klondike.

The water was brought, and Edith with her own hands threw it on the sand.

The result came instantly by singular coincidence.

"Gold! I see it!" cried Renee.

There was no trouble about anybody seeing it. The gold was there.

It lay among the sand in coarse flakes.

Ned violently agitated the rocker and the sand was washed out.

In the bottom of the rocker the pebbles remained, and among them was quite a collection of coarse dust.

"Two ounces at least," said Renee highly pleased.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Ned, contemptuously. "That may do for you Canucks well enough, but it won't suit us at all. We must try it again."

It was encouraging, however, for it showed that the nearer they got to bed rock, the richer the gold deposit was.

The next cradle panned out a hundred dollars; the next brought a hundred and fifty, and the next nearly two hundred.

Business was booming.

Ned went down into the hole and took a good look. As near as he could see the sand was not very rich, and as yet they had not struck bed rock.

"We ought to do well when we get down to hard pan, boss," remarked the old French miner, who was in charge of the work.

"How much further have we got to go, do you estimate?" asked Ned.

"About five feet."

"You'd better put it right through, then. We'll do no more panning until we get the bed rock gravel. There's no use wasting time; we want to know exactly how we stand."

"All right, boss. We'll put her through," was the reply.

But Ned was not satisfied with this.

He determined to take a hand in the game himself. Seizing a pick and shovel he went right at it.

Inside of three feet and a half they struck bed rock.

"Anything big there?" called Dick, from above.

"It looks about the same as far as I can make out," replied Ned.



"We can make two hundred dollars a pan pay well enough, I fancy."

"I don't believe this will run any two hundred a pan. The streak we struck up above there was only accidental. Try a pan of this Dick, and see."

"Coming up to help me?"

"No, I'm going to stay here and look along a little further."

Ned then ordered the Frenchman to send up two buckets of sand, and then go up and help with the rocker.

The fact was Young Klondike had his own ideas, and he wanted to work them out quietly in his own way.

Ned figured it in this style:

Reasoning from the known fact that the gold deposit along the creek bottoms, river beds and lowlands was originally washed down from the mountains, he concluded that the percentage of gold deposit in the bed of the creek must necessarily be less than that lying on bed rock under the solid ground, for the reason that the rush of water along the creek bed must have been longer continued and greater than over the ground.

He therefore determined to tunnel in out of the creek bed and under the point.

This was no difficult task. The hole sunk was only about two feet away from the point.

Ned took the long-handled spade and went right at it.

There was not a trace of frost in the ground here on top of bed rock.

The sand was soft, too, and yielded easily. Ned was able to scoop it out in full shovels.

In a very few moments he was off the line of the creek bed, and he watched every shovelful of sand as he threw it out into the hole with eager interest, you may be very sure.

There was gold among the sand, plenty of it. He could see that.

Still, there were some of the small nuggets, such as are usually found along the line of the Klondike, and nuggets are what pay every time.

"Only twenty dollars in this lot!" shouted Dick, who had become so expert at figuring gold dust values that he seldom went astray.

"What did I tell you?" answered Ned. "That was only a streak. There's nothing big in this hole as yet."

"How are you making out?"

"Haven't struck a fortune yet."

"What you driving at anyhow?" called Dick, looking over into the hole. "Making a tunnel, eh? Well, give us another bucket and I'll try again. Bet you I strike it richer than you."

The bucket was lowered and Ned filled it.

Then he returned to his work and all in a moment the lucky strike came.

The very next time the spade came out of the tunnel a mass of small nuggets came with it.

Ned gave a shout which brought Dick and all the

Frenchmen down into the hole, and Edith bent over the edge watching eagerly as shovelful after shovelful was taken out.

All ran about the same.

It was a deposit of coarse black sand, mixed with small nuggets and dust.

Several bucketsful were hoisted up and the rocker was started again.

The first clean up was over five hundred dollars. The second yielded about seven hundred dollars, the next dropped to three hundred dollars, and then it rose to over five hundred dollars again.

"Hooray for Lucky Camp!" cried Dick. "We don't want anything better than this."

"Our shaft has got to be inside the creek line," declared Ned. "Trotter was right. If we want to do the best we can with the Unknown's claim, this is the place to work for it."

They kept on working for the rest of the day, widening the tunnel and passing clean through the nugget bed on either side, but coming to no end on the line of its strike, as the direction of a gold deposit across country is called.

It was a very rich find, and no mistake about it.

By supper time they had cleaned up over six thousand dollars, actual weight on Young Klondike's gold scales.

Of course, they could not hope for a continuance of such luck every day; still it was thoroughly demonstrated that the Unknown's claim was an exceedingly rich one.

But where was the Unknown?

Night settled down upon Lucky Camp, and still the mystery remained unsolved.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SEARCH FOR THE UNKNOWN.

THERE was no alarm at Lucky Camp that night. Morning dawned clear and cold and still the Unknown had not shown up.

Young Klondike and his friends discussed the situation at breakfast.

While all tried to conceal their uneasiness there was no denying that they were seriously alarmed at the long absence of their eccentric friend.

"If it was anywhere else I wouldn't say a word," remarked Ned, "but after my own experience with the Trotter gang I think we ought to go out and look up the Unknown this morning before we do another thing."

As this was precisely what Dick and Edith wanted to do, there was no objection raised, of course.

They took Renee with them, and leaving the other Frenchman to guard the camp, look after Mrs. Colvin and take care of the steamer, they started up the ravine and made their way back to the hut.

Of course they took every precaution in approach-



ing it, but it proved to be entirely unnecessary, for the hut was found to be entirely deserted.

The fire was out on the hearth, and the door of the hut stood open.

To all appearance there had been no one in the hut in some time.

"This is a bad business," remarked Young Klondike. "What are we going to do now? There is no certainty that the Unknown came up here at all."

"I believe he did, Edith. He told me he was going to."

"Which is remarkable. He never tells his business to anybody."

"That's right," said Dick, "there ain't any closer mouthed man living than the Unknown; but there's one thing, if he was here and found the hut deserted I believe he would leave something behind to tell us which direction he intended to take in case we came after him."

"Don't think it. Wouldn't be a bit like him."

"He was here, boss," said Renee, the Frenchman, pointing to the hearth.

"How do you know?" demanded Ned.

"Look in the ashes—there's the print of his foot."

"There's a foot-print there certainly, but how can you be sure it is his?"

The Frenchman smiled.

"Well, now, I've been a guide up here in the Yukon country all my life," he replied. "I was here in the days when the Hudson Bay Company controlled everything. I guess I'm capable of locating a trail."

"But mightn't that just as well be another man's foot-print as his?"

"It might be, but it ain't. You see the very first thing I always do when I'm engaged by a party is to study their feet, so's to be able to locate their trail if I'm called upon to do it. That's the way I was brought up."

"And you are sure this is the Unknown's?"

"Positive. I'll swear to it anywhere."

"Perhaps you can follow the trail."

"There ain't any doubt about it. That's my business. How far I can follow it I don't say, for there may occur a dozen things to throw me off the track, but I'd like to try it, just the same."

"You shall. Lead on," said Ned. "We are in your hands, Renee."

The *voyageur*, as these old time French guides are called, went out of the hut and moved about with his eye fixed on the ground.

"He went back down the ravine," he declared, after a little.

"Sure?" questioned Ned, doubtfully.

"Don't keep asking me that," said Renee. "If I wasn't sure I wouldn't say so, boss."

"Don't be offended," said Edith. "We only want to know how you do it if you wouldn't mind telling."

"Can't you see any foot-prints?" asked the Frenchman.

"Not a sign of one," said Ned.

"Nor I," added Dick.

"Then what do you call that?" said Renee, pointing to a bed of green moss which covered a rock in their path.

"Upon my word it does look like a foot-print there," said Edith, "but it is very faint."

"It is a foot-print and there is another and another. See, they go right on to the sand here, and now we find them plainer," said Renee, leading them forward.

It was really remarkable.

The strip of sand was close up against the rocks and not in the middle of the ravine.

Ned and his companions would never have noticed it if it had not been for the old guide.

"That man has a foot that hurts him," said Renee. "He walked on the sand instead of on the rocks."

"By gracious, you're right!" exclaimed Dick. "The Unknown bought a new pair of shoes just before we left Dawson and he told me they hurt him."

"Especially the left one," said the guide.

"Especially the left one," admitted Dick. "It is just as you say."

"Now are you willing to leave this trail business to me?" asked Renee.

"Entirely," replied Ned. "You just lead on."

They walked through the ravine an hour after that, Renee seldom speaking, but going on ahead with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

Occasionally he would point out the trail, and when he did so they were always able to see the Unknown's foot-prints.

Then again they would not see them for some time, and in several instances they felt sure that Renee had lost the trail.

At last they came out upon the creek at a considerable distance above Lucky Camp.

"Humph!" exclaimed the guide. "Our friend took a bath here and his lunch—you see."

It was a good place for a bath. Here the creek was broad and shallow and the bottom was covered with clear, sparkling sand.

The grass all around this place had been trodden down; there was an old newspaper with some scraps of bread and bones lying around.

Ned picked up the paper and saw that it was from San Francisco, the date being during the time they were staying there.

"By gracious, I believe you are right!" he exclaimed. "I don't think there is any doubt that the Unknown has been here, but where did he go next?"

"That remains to be discovered," replied Renee, and he went right at it moving up and down the creek, here, there any everywhere.

They all watched him earnestly, and Ned soon came to the conclusion that he was all at sea.

"Can't you find the trail?" he asked, after a little.

"No, I can't, but I shall in a moment," was the reply. "I want to make sure he didn't go away from



here on this side before I cross to the other, and I guess I've done it. I'm going over now."

Renee pulled off his shoes and stockings and waded across the creek, but he met with no better success on the opposite bank, and was soon able to positively declare that the trail was not on the other side.

"There's no use talking, boss," he said, "I guess I'm stumped now."

"I thought the Unknown would get the best of you sooner or later," laughed Edith. "Of course, he took to the creek."

"Yes, but did he go up or down?" questioned Ned.

"That's the idea exactly," replied the guide. "We have no possible means of telling."

"There's only one way of finding out, then."

"By going both up and down?"

"So I say. Do you agree with me?"

"Certainly I do. We'll try it up first. If he went down, he probably would have returned to the camp, so it is safe to say he went up."

"That's right. Shall we start?"

"Yes. I'll keep on here in the water," replied the guide, and that was the way they went, continuing on for more than a mile, when they came to a ravine from which the creek emerged.

They had now reached the foot of the mountain again, and right ahead of them was a charming little waterfall. The waters came tumbling over the rocks down from a height of some twenty feet.

"He must have gone ashore here," said Renee, "but I've reached the end of my rope; there's no possible chance of my recovering the trail."

"What's the matter?" demanded Dick.

"Why, don't you see the rocks?" said the guide. "The Unknown probably went up the mountain. I'll guarantee to find his trail again if you give me time, but I should have to try both sides."

"Which is what we shall have to do," declared Ned. "I'm going right up this side now."

"If you'll do that I'll take the other," said Renee. "We can keep each other in sight probably, but you'll have to look sharp."

"Trust me for that," said Ned. "Edith, you stay here, it's entirely too rough for you."

"Would you mind if I did, Ned? I'm getting awfully tired."

"Certainly not; do it, by all means. Dick shall stay with you."

"Come, I don't like that!" exclaimed Dick. "You stay, Ned, and let me go up the rocks."

"Go on, both of you," said Edith. "I ain't a bit afraid to stay here alone."

"That shan't be," said Dick. "I'll stay."

"No. I'll stay," said Ned.

Meanwhile Renee had started off. Ned saw that they were losing time.

"Let's draw lots for it," he said. "We both want to go and we both can't. I'll toss up a cent."

"Heads I go, tails I stay," cried Dick, and tails the cent came down.

"Good-by!" shouted Ned, and away he went bounding up the rocks.

He soon found it necessary to check his speed, however, as the rocks were very rugged and steep.

After Ned had climbed to a considerable height above the falls he looked around for Renee.

Here the creek was divided into two parts, and the guide stood on a big rock near the junction."

"I'm going up this way, boss," called Renee. "You take the other run."

"Seen anything of the trail yet?" asked Ned.

"Nothing. There is no chance here on the rocks. How is it with you?"

"Just the same."

"He may not have come this way at all."

"Which would mean that you had missed the trail as we came up the creek."

"Exactly. It is quite possible."

"How far do you mean to go before you give it up?"

"Can't tell now. From the looks of things, though, I should think it likely that I was going to strike another fall before I've gone far. Chances are I shall be cut off altogether then."

"And on my side?"

"I think your chance is better than mine. If the Unknown went up here at all I believe it was on your side."

"That means I've got to be extra careful to keep my eyes open," declared Ned.

They parted then, Young Klondike continuing his climb up over the rocks.

He had not gone far before he came out upon a broad shelf on the mountain side.

It was several acres in extent; the ground here was literally one bed of moss.

"If the Unknown went this way at all, I ought to strike his trail now," thought Ned.

He stopped and sent a sharp look over the moss.

Sure enough there was a line of foot-prints leading off from the very point where he stood.

They looked just like those Ned had seen in the moss down in the ravines, and felt no doubt that he had struck the trail.

"I must let Renee know immediately," he thought. "We mustn't be separated. I'll hurry back."

It was such easy traveling here that he determined to bring Edith and Dick up, and started back to the place where he had left Renee, hurrying down over the rocks, hardly looking to see what lay on either side of him.

Of course, this was careless of Young Klondike—very much so.

He paid for it in less than a moment by a good, hearty scare, which might have been something worse.

Suddenly a tall Indian, dressed in a heavy moose-skin coat, sprang out from a clump of fir trees, throwing himself directly in Ned's path with his tomahawk raised to strike.

It was Black Deer!



"Ugh! Ugh! Klondike boss," grunted the Indian. "Ugh! Ugh!"

He sprang at Ned, who was so taken aback that he had no time to fire or even to unsling his rifle, but the boy was ready in his own defense nevertheless.

He dodged nimbly to one side as Black Deer brought down the tomahawk.

It did not strike Young Klondike's head, as was intended.

Instead, Black Deer, throwing himself forward to give force to the blow, slipped on the rocks and went down on his nose.

This was right at the edge of the precipice which overhung the creek.

Once more Ned's quickness of action saved him.

Turning on the Indian before he had time to rise, he gave him a violent kick, which sent him whirling down over the precipice toward the stream.

Black Deer gave a wild yell, and somehow managed to turn himself, and to Ned's astonishment, landed on his feet unharmed.

"Ugh! Ugh! Me kill Klondike boss!" he called out. "Me kill! Me kill!"

Then away he dashed down the rocks and disappeared.

Ned fired one shot after him—he was out of sight before he could aim again.

"Hello! Hello!"

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, I'm right here!" he heard the well-remembered voice of the Unknown calling off among the fir trees.

This sent Ned in among the trees flying.

He had not gone ten steps before he saw the Unknown standing against a tree.

"Hello, Zed! What in thunder are you doing there?" he cried. "Come on! Come on!"

"How can I come on?" answered the detective. "Ye gods and little fishes, can't you see that I'm tied to the tree?"

"Blamed if you ain't! I didn't see! Who's around here?" answered Ned, springing to his side.

He whipped out his knife and cut the Unknown free.

"It's only Trotter and his gang and half a dozen Indians to boot," replied the detective.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, dear boy, I let them take me. I've been tied up here all night. I'm almost dead."

"You don't look it. Where are they?"

"Don't know. Black Deer was here a moment ago. Did you kill him, Ned?"

"Not much. I kicked him down into the creek, but he got away all right."

"Then he'll have the gang down on us in two shakes of a ram's tail. Where's Edith and Dick?"

"Down below the falls. Can't you move faster than this? Try."

"Can't be done, dear boy. I'm as stiff as a ramrod. Look out! I hear them coming. Leave me, Ned. Leave me and save yourself."

As though Ned would have thought of such a thing

Although he could very distinctly hear many footsteps approaching no such idea ever entered his head.

They ran on down the slope, but before they had gone six yards the situation grew more serious.

Suddenly Trotter and Don appeared on the rocks behind them, and to make matters worse half a dozen Indians sprang out of the cover of the fir trees and planted themselves directly in their path.

"We are lost!" gasped the Unknown as the shots began to fly, and Trotter called out for them to surrender.

"We must take to the creek!" gasped Ned. "Jump and save yourself. We can't do anything else."

It was their only chance, and even then it was doubtful if they could pass the Indians unharmed.

They sprang down into the creek landing on their feet all right, and ran on down over the slippery rocks with the water half way to their knees.

"Fire! Fire! shoot 'em down! Jump after them!" yelled Trotter, but the jumping part was easier said than done.

At the point where the Indians were, the rocks were much higher, and what is more they were receding. It was in fact impossible to jump.

The shots fired by the Indians were all misses, and they did not try to jump, knowing that it would be useless, but just ran on down the slope at top speed.

"Keep it up! Keep it up!" said Ned, encouragingly. "We've got the start of them anyhow. We may still escape."

Ned had forgotten the falls.

All in a moment they came upon them.

Running over the slippery rocks there was no chance to stop themselves.

The Indians were close behind them.

Nothing remained but to jump over the falls.

Edith and Dick saw them from below and flung up their rifles as Ned and the Unknown made one wild leap over the falling water.

It was a desperate chance that Young Klondike had taken, but good luck seemed to be with Ned that day, and both he and the Unknown landed on their feet entirely unharmed.

"Blaze away, Dick! Let 'em have it, Edith!" shouted the detective.

Evidently the Unknown had been robbed of his rifle, for it was not in its usual place, slung over his shoulder, but Ned had his all right, and he lost no time putting it to use, firing several shots.

The Indians halted.

Evidently they did not care to face so determined an enemy, and that is what they would have been obliged to do if they had jumped over the falls.

Then Ned fired again and wounded one, and Edith took another in the leg which seemed to settle it, for the Indians hastily climbed the rocks on the other side of the creek and disappeared among the trees.

"Scoot, now!" cried the detective. "Get down to the mouth of the ravine."

"But Renee," objected Dick.



"He'll join us," replied Ned. "We must get to a place of safety. Run! Run!"

And run they did, as though the "old boy" himself was at their heels.

By the time they reached the level there was not an Indian in sight.

Here they paused for breath and waited for the guide.

"He'll be certain to hear the shots!" declared Ned. "He'll get back to us as fast as he can."

And sure enough, within a few moments they saw Renee sneaking down over the rocks on the other side of the creek.

He held up his hand for silence, joining them in a moment.

"Did you see the Indians? Were you firing at them?" he asked.

"Well, now, we just were," replied the Unknown.

"They are back up there! I saw them!"

"So you got him, boss? By gracious, you're a lucky one. Success always comes your way."

"We don't want to stay here talking or we'll have to do it all over again," said the Unknown. "Let's hurry back to Lucky Camp and I'll tell you all about it as I go."

The Unknown's story did not amount to very much.

It appeared that he had followed the trail Renee discovered, and wandered far in the mountains looking for Trotter and his gang.

It was not until he started to return that he was captured.

Trotter seemed to have other business on hand according to the detective, and his plan was just to hold the Unknown a prisoner until he got ready to make a descent on Lucky Camp.

"Which he will do sooner or later," he added.

"We'd better be prepared for it, but it won't come for a few days."

"You speak as though you knew all about it," said Ned. "What are you keeping back? I can see you know more than you have told."

"Which I do, just as sure as my name ain't Mike Mulligan."

"That's dead sure. What is it?"

"It's to the effect that this claim of mine is a bigger thing than I thought for. We ain't working it for all it is worth yet."

"What now? Those are only hints; explain."

"Tra-la-la, dear boy! I'll explain later. I've got to go off on another secret expedition first."

"I wish to gracious you'd stay in one place," exclaimed Dick. "It takes all our spare time and some that ought not to be spared to hunt you up, and keep you from being scalped!"

"Scalped! Not much. Nobody ever suggested such a thing. Know what I think, Edith?"

"I'm sure I don't," laughed Edith.

"I'm sure those Indians imagined that my hat was part of my head. You ought to have seen them look at it."

"What did Trotter say to you—that's more to the

point," replied Ned. "What's the use of making so much mystery about all this?"

But the Unknown loved a mystery always, and in spite of all his questioning Ned had not succeeded in learning his secret by the time they reached the camp.

## CHAPTER X.

### A BIG DAY'S DIGGING.

CONTRARY to the expectations of the boys, the Unknown said nothing about going away next day.

On the contrary he reversed his usual order and declared he was going to work in the mines.

As Young Klondike had determined to go right on with the tunnel and not attempt to sink another shaft at present, the Unknown took a shovel and went down into the hole working with the rest.

"We ought to be able to run the tunnel in about twenty feet in course of a couple of weeks," remarked Ned, as he and the detective stood looking at the wall of gravel with its deposit of nuggets bristling all over it.

"What will you do then, dear boy?" the detective asked.

"Clean up and go back to Dawson."

"And then?"

"Bring up a lot of men, and start your claim going after our usual style."

"Good enough! You consider my claim a success already, Ned?"

"Most decidedly."

"A big success?"

"Yes, don't you?"

"It's going to be bigger."

"Who says it ain't?"

"Not I. What's more, while you are hiring men in Dawson City you may as well hire two gangs—they'll be needed here."

"That means more of your mystery."

"Perhaps."

"Pshaw! You are as shallow as a saucer. Just as though I couldn't guess."

"What's your guess, Young Klondike?"

"You overheard something while you were a prisoner up there on the mountain?"

"Perhaps."

"Of course you did."

"And what was that something?"

"That Trotter & Co. are working a shaft on the land we bought. That it?"

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, you've got a great head, Mr. Ned Golden! That's what I did overhear. It was talked out between Trotter and that fellow Don. Ha! Ha! They did their talking in Spanish. They thought I didn't understand."

"And you do understand Spanish?"

"Perfectly; but I ain't a Spaniard, though—don't you think it. I learned the language in Cuba."



"When you were chasing your man down there?"

"Exactly."

"Any other language you learned the same way?"

"Why, lots of them."

"Such as?"

"French, Italian, German, Russian, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, and——"

"Hold on! hold on! I think we'd better get to work."

"What's the matter now?"

"I don't like to have you imperil the safety of your immortal soul by telling too many whoppers."

"Oh, never you mind my soul—that's all right. I was going to add that I can speak Hindostanee like a native, and——"

"And I wouldn't if I were you. Let's give the lies a rest and go to digging gold."

"Lies, lies! Do you mean to insult me, Young Klondike? Ye gods and little fishes, I ain't used to such talk as that."

"No? Then for fear you might get used to it I think I'll go right to gold digging. Perhaps by the time the day is over you'll get ready to tell your secret."

Thus saying, Ned started in on the drift, for there was just no end to this repartee business once the Unknown got well under way.

It was a most successful day's digging.

All stuck right at it, and by quitting time they had cleaned up between two and three thousand dollars, which was certainly a good day's work, but there was better still to come.

Ned and Dick then went for a swim in the Klondike river before supper.

The water was icy cold, and the mosquitoes so thick that they were almost devoured, so they were entirely satisfied with one dip, and glad to hurry back to the hut.

Edith met them at the door, looking rather annoyed.

"The Unknown is off again!" she exclaimed. "I tried my best to hold him, but it was no use. He gobbled down his supper and was gone like a shot."

"Just like him," said Dick. "Now I suppose we shall have to spend all to-morrow night hunting him up again."

"Don't believe it," declared Ned. "He'll be more careful this time. I think you'll find that he will turn up all right before morning."

And Ned hit it off correct this time.

About half past twelve while he was on the watch he caught sight of a man moving down the creek.

Ned was on the alert instantly.

He was alone on the watch and anybody else would have been for calling up his companions but Ned never thought of such a thing.

"I'll find out who it is before I raise any alarm," he determined, and he crept from the shadow of the hut down to the creek, dropped down among the tall grass and waited.

In less than a minute he knew that all this precaution was unnecessary, for he caught sight of the old plug hat.

It was only the Unknown.

Ned let him come until he was within a few feet of where he lay and then sprang up with a sharp cry:

"Who goes there?"

"Ye gods and little fishes! Is it you, Young Klondike!" gasped the detective, starting back. "Heavens, what a turn you gave me. It's a dangerous thing to do, though. It's a big wonder you didn't get shot."

"Oh, I ain't afraid of you one bit," laughed Ned. "You didn't even draw on me. I honestly believe you thought of running away."

"Hard on the old detective, as usual. Come now, didn't I save you the trouble of hunting me up this time? Didn't have to jump over any waterfalls to get the old man back."

"That's right. What have you learned?"

"All that I want to know, Young Klondike, and I think you'll admit when you hear it, that it's a good deal."

"You'd better sit down here on this log and tell me all about it."

"Wouldn't ask for a better chance. Is everybody asleep?"

"Everybody!"

"No alarm?"

"No. It's all right; now out with it. Is Trotter working another claim?"

"That's what he is, and it's a rich one."

"You've been there?"

"Yes, I've been watching them this three hours."

"Hello! 'Taint't so far away, then?"

"It's only about three quarters of a mile from here, on that little stream which runs off from the creek."

"Then that accounts for their holding off in their attack on Lucky Camp?"

"Entirely; I don't believe they mean to attack us. All they want is to be let alone."

"I don't believe that. If they see a chance to jump on us they are going to do it, you may be very sure; but tell me about this camp of theirs. Is it on our land?"

"That's what it is. Look at your map and see."

"I can't see anything on the map here in the dark."

"Yes, you can. I'll light my lantern."

It was easy enough to study the map when the Unknown got out his lantern. The detective then pointed to the place where the claim shark was at work, and Ned saw at a glance that it was on their claim.

"They'll have to get out of there," he declared positively. "I won't stand any such nonsense as this."

"That's what I knew you'd say," replied the Unknown, "and if you mean to shake them up there'll be no better chance than the present, for T. T. and Don are working there alone."



"Hello! Where are the Indians?"

"Can't tell you where they are. All I know is they ain't there?"

"Does T. T. seem to be finding much?"

"Does he? Well, you ought to go and look. I saw a lot come out of the pans."

"Then I say let's move on 'em right now."

"If we do it must be a move they'll feel and not laugh at."

"Do you mean to kill them? I don't like that."

"No, nor I don't either, and I don't want to do it, but we must give them such a scare that they'll hustle off my claim and keep off for awhile. I reckon we can do that all right."

"Shall we take all hands with us?"

"I say no. Let it just be you and me and Edith and Dick. We are used to each other, and can manage it all right if we try."

"You bet we can. We'll shake 'em right up; come on."

Edith and Dick were aroused, and Ned explained the situation to them.

They then armed themselves with rifles, and under the guidance of the Unknown started up the creek for Trotter's camp.

They soon came to the branch creek, and following that for a short distance, came to a place where there were many big bowlders piled up.

"This is the spot," said the detective in a whisper. "Hold on here now and I'll show you where they are."

He pointed further down the creek and Ned was able to see a little shelter built of boughs, beyond which was a heap of freshly turned up earth.

He had suspected the place, for there was a smoldering fire near it.

"There you are," said the Unknown. "That's the spot. They were still working when I left here, but I reckon they've knocked off now and turned in for a little sleep."

"Suppose we capture them and take them aboard the steamer," suggested Edith.

"I wouldn't be bothered with them," declared Ned. "Let's get around the hut and begin firing. That will give them a chance to scoot, and I don't believe we shall see any more of them at all."

This was agreed upon.

All hands now spread themselves, Ned and Dick going to the right of the shelter, Edith and the Unknown taking the left side.

Here they took up their places behind the bowlders, and Ned waved his hat for a signal to fire.

Immediately the rifles began popping away on both sides of the shelter, and with the desired effect.

In a moment Mr. Timotheus Trotter and the man Don came sneaking out.

They stopped no longer than to give a hasty glance around, and then plunging into the creek waded to the opposite bank and ran for all they were worth, disappearing down the slope beyond.

"That's what's the matter!" chuckled Ned. "Wonder what they thought?"

It was hard telling, for Trotter and his partner had vanished, and what is more, neither of them came back again.

Young Klondike and his party waited for awhile, and then went down to the shelter where they found one shaft had been sunk below the frost level and another was partly dug; the remains of the fire was still burning in the hole.

There were a few mining tools scattered about, but no sign of gold. Yet the Unknown declared that he heard Trotter say that a rich strike had been made on this very spot.

"Come, let's go back," said Ned. "We've given them a good scare, and I don't believe they mean to come back again. We'll take it up in the morning and see what we've struck."

"Anyhow this is on my claim," said the Unknown.

"You bet it is, and I mean to make our claim to it good, if we have to kill every idle man in Dawson City to enforce it," declared Ned.

But matters took altogether a different turn from what might have been expected.

Ned felt sure that Trotter would be found back at the diggings with his Indians next morning, if indeed they did not hear from them sooner, but it was not so at all.

The remainder of the night passed without alarm, and when they all went up to the place after daylight, leaving the Frenchman to continue the work at Lucky Camp and look out for Mrs. Colvin, they found the place entirely deserted as they had left it the night before.

"Hello! We've scared them off for good, I reckon!" exclaimed the Unknown; "suppose we get right to work and see how this hole pans out?"

"That's what," said Dick. "I believe there's something rich here and that was the reason Trotter did not want the Indians to get on to it."

"We'll pitch right in," said Edith. "Zed and I can do the panning all right."

"Not much! I'm going to work in the hole," declared the detective, stubbornly. "This is my claim and I mean to have my own way for once."

"Just as though you ever had anything else," laughed Edith, "but it shall be as you want it. All I care for is to help the best I can."

Ned started right in by dropping down into the shaft which was about twenty feet deep, letting himself down hand over hand by the rope which carried the bucket and which hung suspended from a rude frame work over the hole.

It needed but one glance to tell him that they had struck a big thing.

The shaft had already been sunk to the level of the pay streak, and a drift had been driven along this to the distance of two or three feet.

"Big luck here!" shouted Ned. "You can see the nuggets all over the wall."



The Unknown came sliding down the rope, and went wild at what he saw.

"By the Jumping Jeremiah, this knocks everything silly," he exclaimed. "We shall make a million a month out of this hole. I feel it in my boots."

Ned laughed, and declared that he had rather see it in the bottom of the pan, and then they went to work, and began one of the biggest day's diggings they had ever put in since they came to the Klondike.

At the end of the first hour they had cleaned up five hundred dollars.

The second hour brought this up to eleven hundred dollars. The third hour carried it with one big jump to three thousand dollars, and the fourth carried the boom steadily forward to nearly five thousand dollars.

So interested had they become in their work that no one ever thought of dinner, and they kept steadily on until nearly six o'clock; when they finally quit there was a little pile of nuggets and dust amounting to over ten thousand dollars lying under the shelter, all of which was carried down to Lucky Camp.

It was a big day's digging, and it had been accomplished without even an alarm from the enemy.

Had Trotter given up the fight?

Ned was not foolish enough to think so.

He felt very sure that Mr. T. T. was not that sort of man.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE STAND ON THE STEAMER.

NEXT morning Ned and his companions started up to the new diggings again and put in another big day's work, returning at night with fully eight thousand dollars in gold.

Nor was this all. Work on the Lucky Camp shaft had been kept right up by the Frenchman.

Whether Renee faithfully accounted for all that was taken out or not was an open question, but the fact remained that he turned over to Young Klondike something more than four thousand dollars in nuggets and dust.

And all this time nothing was heard of Mr. T. T., but that night the alarm came, and a very serious affair it proved to be.

It began to rain just after sundown, and rain on the Klondike generally means a downpour.

When Ned first heard the rattle of the rain on the roof he made up his mind that it was sure to be a big storm and hurried out of the hut to have a look.

"It's started in for business, hasn't it?" asked Dick, looking out through the door.

"That's what it has. Holler for Zed, he's a better judge of the weather than either of us."

The detective was supposed to be up at the other hut talking to the Frenchman, but when Dick gave

the call Renee came out and declared that he was not there.

"Perhaps he's on the steamer," suggested Dick. "Go and see, Renee."

But he wasn't. A moment later Renee was calling from the deck of the steamer to say that he could find nothing of the Unknown.

"He's off again!" said Ned. "Confound him, he'll never let well enough alone. Now he's in for a ducking, and it will serve him just right."

It certainly looked that way, for the rain was coming down harder than ever.

"We'd better look to the dam," said Dick. "This is going to give it a great old shake-up or I'm very much mistaken."

Calling the Frenchman, Young Klondike and Dick went to the dam and spent an hour throwing all the big stones they could find into the crib getting thoroughly soaked in the operation, for the rain poured in torrents all the while.

At last they gave it up and went back to the huts, where Ned and Dick stripped and rubbed themselves down before the open fire, Edith and Mrs. Colvin having retired to their loft long before.

"It's going to be a big storm, Dick," remarked Ned. "I do wish the Unknown was in."

"Don't see any sense in his going out anyhow," replied Dick. "There won't be any attack a night like this."

"Of course not. But it's just like him. I—hark! Wasn't that a shot?"

It certainly wasn't anything else. It rang out clear and distinct in the distance. Then came another and another and then a loud cry.

"Klondike! Klondike! Beware! Beware!"

"It's the Unknown!" exclaimed Ned, and without stopping to put on his clothes he ran outside the door in the rain.

"There he is, Dick!" he cried.

He could see the detective dashing down alongside the creek as fast as his stumpy little legs could carry him.

He caught sight of Ned and waved his rifle, but there was no one to be seen behind him, so far as the boys could make out.

"What's the matter?" called Edith, from the loft, for she had been aroused by the shots.

"Wait a moment," replied Ned. "It's all right."

It had to be until he and Dick could pull on their clothes, and by that time the Unknown was with them to say that it was all wrong.

"The creek is rising," he exclaimed, as he came bursting into the hut, "and so are the Indians! There are as many as fifty running down upon us with Trotter and Don in the lead!"

"Hello!" called Edith, opening the trap door again, "I guess I'm needed. Can I come down now?"

"The sooner the better," replied the Unknown. "We are going to need all the good shots we can get and there ain't any better shot around than you are. Run and wake up the Frenchman, Dick! Young



Klondike, if you take my advice, you'll help me get the gold on to the steamer. I'm afraid we are going to have serious trouble before we see the end of this night's work. Heavens! what's that?"

Suddenly there was a loud report and a ripping, tearing sound.

All hands flew to the open and saw a wall of water sweeping down toward them. The dam had vanished, but up at some distance beyond the place where it had been Ned could see a big force of Indians scrambling up out of the water on to the rocks.

Trouble had struck Lucky Camp for fair.

A small lake far up in the mountains, swollen by the rain had broken away its barriers, and the water being thrown suddenly into the creek, was coming down upon the camp with a rush.

This was more than even the Unknown had bargained for, since he had seen only the beginning of it all.

Apparently the Indians were taken equally by surprise.

Meanwhile, Dick had reached the other hut, and was shouting to the Frenchman:

"Get inside! The hut may go!" called Ned. "Make for the steamer as soon as you can!"

Without waiting to see if Dick obeyed, all laid hold of the boxes in which the gold had been packed, and made a rush for the steamer themselves.

Of course they could not carry all of them—not half, and they ran a great risk in thus loading themselves down even as it was, for the water was upon them before they could reach the Arctic Boy.

It was up to Young Klondike's waist when he climbed aboard the steamer, threw down his box and lent Edith a hand to lift her on board, the detective doing the same for Mrs. Colvin.

They scarcely had time to collect themselves when they saw the Frenchman's hut tip right over and come floating toward them.

"Heavens!" screamed Edith. "Dick is lost!"

"And there come the Indians!" cried Mrs. Colvin. "See, they are running down through the water to the point ahead of us where they can sweep the deck with their rifles, and they've got 'em, too."

It was a serious case now, but Young Klondike instead of getting rattled, took it as coolly as you please.

"Don't say a word!" he cried. "We are all right and we are going to stay so. We'll make a stand right here on the steamer and take things as they come!"

## CHAPTER XII.

### JUST IN TIME.

BEFORE Ned had fairly spoken, the hut which they had just abandoned was swept off its foundations and turned over on its side.

At the same instant Dick came climbing out of the window of the other hut which was being swept rapidly toward the Arctic Boy.

"Throw me a line, Ned!" he shouted. "If we pass you we are in the soup."

Ned caught up a line and hastily made it fast to a spare hawser.

"Here goes!" he cried, and, swinging the rope about his head like a lasso, he let fly.

Dick caught it deftly, and held on for dear life.

He was standing in the side of the hut then, and the Frenchman came climbing out of the window and joined him.

"We can pull in," he shouted. "Look out for Trotter's gang, Ned!"

Ned had not forgotten them. He could see the Indians, some fifty in number, led by Trotter and Don, running at full speed toward a point of higher land just beyond where the Arctic Boy lay moored.

As they were already on high ground it was not necessary for them to go through the water in order to get there, and once they were there it would be an easy matter to sweep the deck of the steamer with the rifles with which nearly all were armed.

Meanwhile, the other hut went sweeping past them, first into the creek and then down into the Klondike; the steamer would have followed if it had not been tied up to a large fir tree.

"Confound it!" cried the Unknown, "if we only had steam up we could cut out of here in great shape, but as it is we've got to stand our ground, come what will."

"That's what's the matter," replied Ned. "Take it easy, Edith, you've got first shot; don't let a man come up there on the bluff."

Just then a steamer's whistle was heard hoarsely in the distance.

No one paid much attention to it, all being too much excited to think what it could mean to hear such a thing in this lonely spot further up the Klondike than miners ever came.

Meanwhile, Dick and the Frenchman were pulling on the hawser bringing the hut nearer and nearer to the steamer every instant.

Edith and the Unknown kept their eyes fixed upon the Indians and a moment later Edith's rifle spoke.

The first of the Indians had gained the point.

He turned and aimed at the steamer, but never fired.

Edith settled his business in short order.

The Indian dropped his rifle and throwing up his hands with a wild yell went tumbling over the edge of the bluff.

Then it was another and another.

"Keep low!" yelled Trotter. "Keep low."

The Indians all dropped then and crawled up over the bluff, Trotter and Don doing the same.

It was impossible to get so low and aim in the darkness.

"They are going down on the other side!" cried the Unknown.



"Let 'em go," replied Ned, who was attending to the hawser.

"They must have boats there."

"Let 'em have 'em! I can't help it! Hooray! We've got Dick!"

The hut was alongside the Arctic Boy now.

Dick made the line fast, and with the Frenchman came climbing on deck.

"Where's Trotter and his Indians?" he demanded.

Edith pointed to the bluff over which the Indians were dropping.

"Huh! They've got friends there," said Renee. "Say, boss, our troubles ain't over yet."

"Oh, if we could only put out onto the river," growled the Unknown. "What fools we were not to keep steam up."

"It's too late to think of it now, unless we want to drift," said Ned. "What do you say to doing that?"

"I say yes," cried Dick. "It will bring matters to a head. Ned, have you got the gold?"

"Some of it—not all!"

"The rest has gone with the hut?"

"That's what; no matter, there's plenty more where it came from. There, the last of the Indians have gone now; I wouldn't wonder if they intended to make off down the river, and don't mean to bother us after all."

"Don't you flatter yourself," said the Unknown. "The how of it is, Trotter sent for this crowd after our first fight, and the reason he didn't bother us sooner was because he was waiting for them to come."

"It certainly looks that way," said Edith, "but I can't believe they've gone to all this trouble just to go sneaking away like that."

"Of course, they haven't," cried Ned, "but we'll soon know. Get down into the engine-room and start the fire, Renee. We'll cut loose and just let ourselves drift. In a couple of minutes we'll be around the point, and then we'll know the worst."

Renee hurried to obey, and just then the hoarse whistle was heard again.

"What in thunder is that?" cried the Unknown. "By the Jumping Jeremiah, it can't be another steamer coming up to our place?"

"Sounds like it! Let her come, if it is," called Ned, who was in the act of casting off the line which held the boat to the tree.

Immediately they were caught in the rushing current which was growing swifter every instant, and went sweeping down the stream.

In a moment they rounded the point and knew what they had to contend with, and it was serious enough.

Instead of fifty Indians, there were at least a hundred lying in wait for them.

They were in canoes, and immediately began to paddle out from the shore.

Fact was, as Young Klondike learned later, a general attack on Lucky Camp had been arranged for that night, but the coming of the flood had disarranged all Trotter's plans, although they might have

been carried out had not the watchful detective seen the party coming down the ravine and fired that warning shot.

"They are going to board us!" cried Ned. "Fire! Drive them back!"

But this was a game two could play at.

Trotter cried "Fire!" also, and a whirl of cold lead came spinning toward the Arctic Boy, while the boats came swarming about the steamer.

But it was easier to fire down than to fire up, and Edith's splendid marksmanship disabled more than one rower.

"Board her! Board her!" yelled Trotter.

He aimed at Ned, the shot narrowly missing, and then, before there was time to make another move, the whole scene changed.

Changed because a large river steamer came in sight around the bend.

It was the old Belle of Yukon loaded down with passengers.

They were crowded along the guards, and many seeing the situation fired at the Indians.

This settled it. Trotter saw that the game was played out and gave the word to retreat.

As the Belle of Yukon steamed toward the Arctic Boy, the Indians paddled up into another small creek which here emptied into the Klondike and were seen no more.

A little later and Young Klondike had the pleasure of welcoming the Mayor of Dawson City and several prominent members of the Mining Exchange to what was left of Lucky Camp.

They had come up along with a big company of newly arrived Klondikers to survey the claims far up the river and thought they would give Golden & Luckey a call at their new camp.

Of course, there was no attempt made to land before daylight, by which time the storm was over and the water back in something like its usual channels.

The visitors were then taken ashore, and Ned later showed the fine prospects in both shafts, and offered the Klondikers claims for an exceedingly low price along the line of the creek.

Almost all accepted this offer, and within a few days a busy settlement was in full blast on the Unknown's claim.

Of course that meant the last seen of the Trotter gang, and Golden and Lucky continued to work their shafts to great profit for awhile, after which they sold them and started off to look for new diggings, encountering many surprising adventures, which will be found fully detailed in the next story of this series, entitled "YOUNG KLONDIKE'S LOST MILLION; OR, THE MINE WRECKERS OF GOLD CREEK."

[THE END.]



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